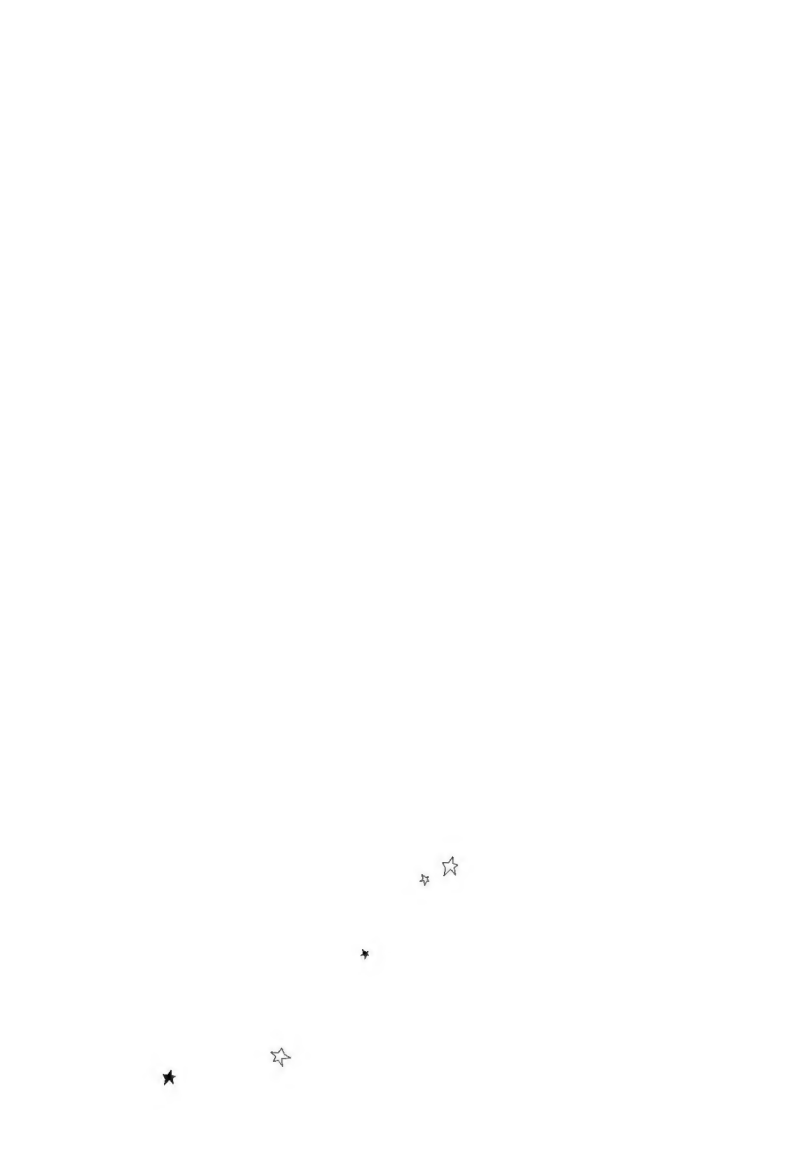
GOODNIGHT
PUNPUN
4
INIO ASANO
PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT
CONTENT

GOODNIGHT PUNPUN

4

Story and Art by INIO ASANO



GOODNIGHT PUNPUN

Part Seven

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STORY THUS FAR...

Nothing to speak of.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PUNPUN ONODERA
Punpun of the Onoderas.
A senior in high school.

YUICHI ONODERA
Punpun's uncle.

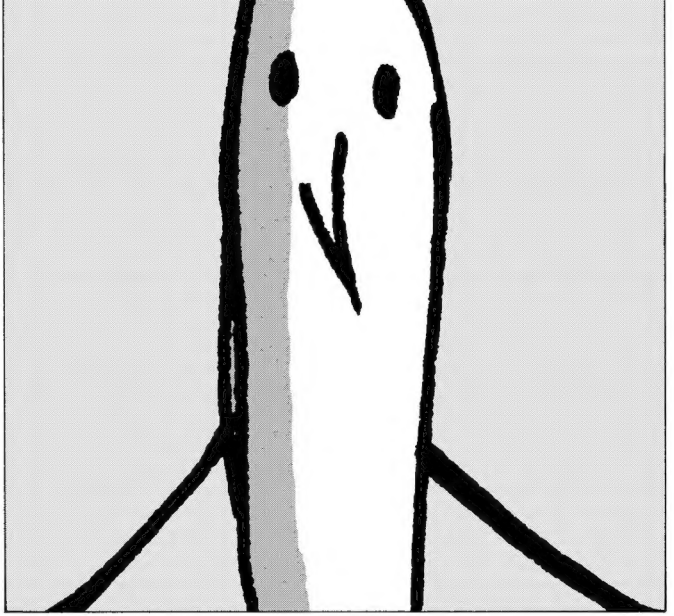
MIDORI ONODERA
Yuichi's wife.

YUKINOSHIN MIMURA
A legendary giant reborn after 300 years.

Chapter 68

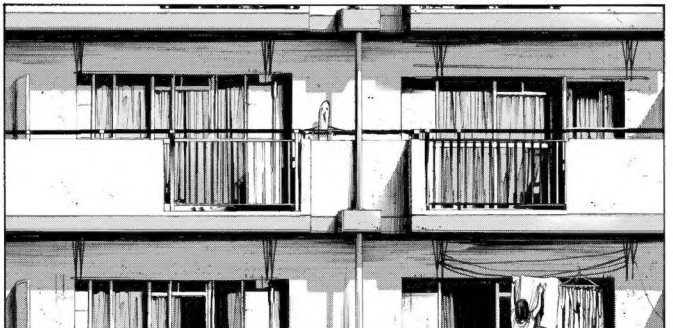
DRIVER ...
...CAN YOU LET ME OFF HERE?
YOU SURE?
IT'LL BE A BIT OF A WALK.
YEAH.
I NEED TO COMPOSE MYSELF.
M---N
N---ZZ---M

MIIN
P
文



The chorus of elementary school kids excited by summer vacation mingled with the sound of the cicadas.

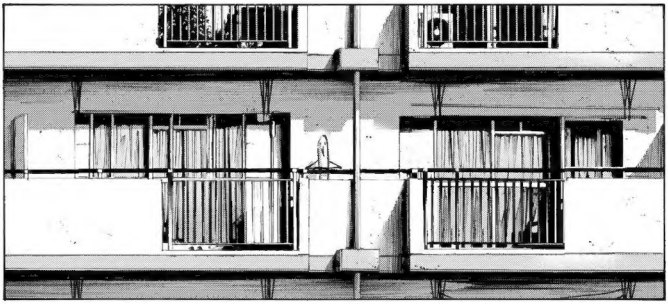
It was sunny all over the country that day, and in Punpun's town it was an extremely hot 99°F. It was the highest temperature of the summer.



In short, he was very unhappy with **right now.**

That's right.

Punpun disliked summer. And winter was cold, so he didn't like it either.

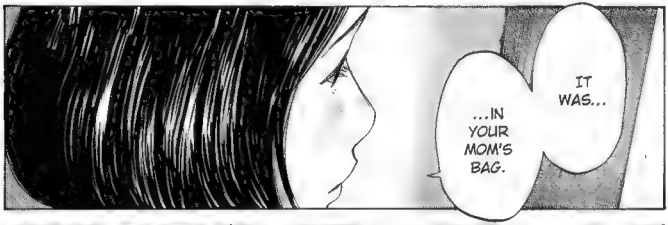


...but all he was concerned about was the weather and the seasons.

There were lots of other things he should have been thinking about...

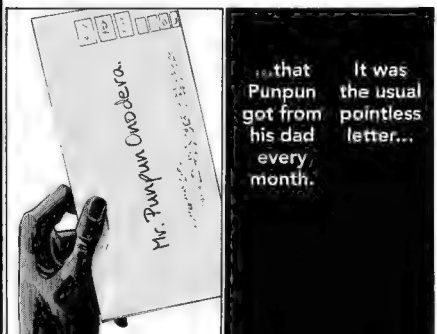
PUNPUN SEEMS DOWN...
HE DOESN'T SHOW IT, BUT HE'S SUFFERING.

REALLY?
I DON'T THINK SO.
PUNPUN.



...this letter didn't have a stamp or a return address.

But **unlike** usual...

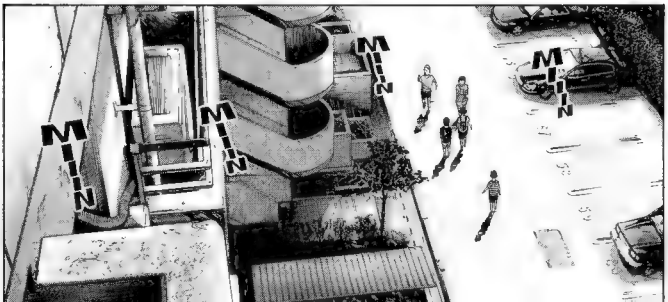


...that Punpun got from his dad every month.

It was the usual pointless letter...

Dear Punpun,
I am really sorry for lying to
you all this time.
tending to be your dad and
ng to you was the only
uld meddle.
lease for give me for
eing selfish.
Mom

Even...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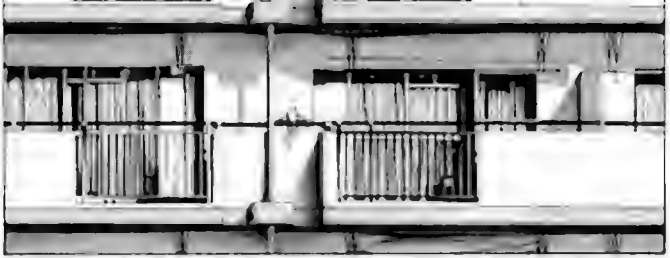
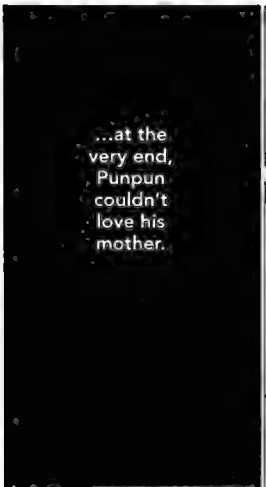
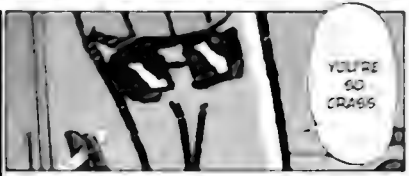


DID YOU REALLY...
...HAVE TO GIVE HIM THAT LETTER?


...at the very end, Punpun couldn't love his mother.


YOU'RE SO CRAZY

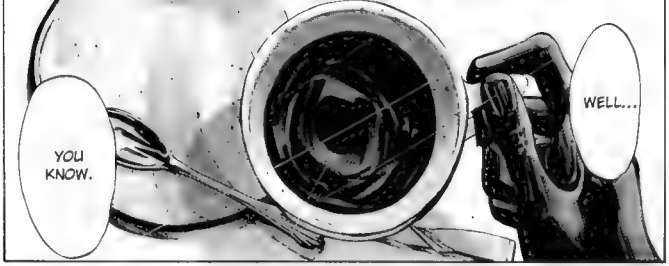
BUT...

IT'S PUNYAMA.
SORRY FOR JUST SHOWING UP.
OH, HELLO... HELLO...

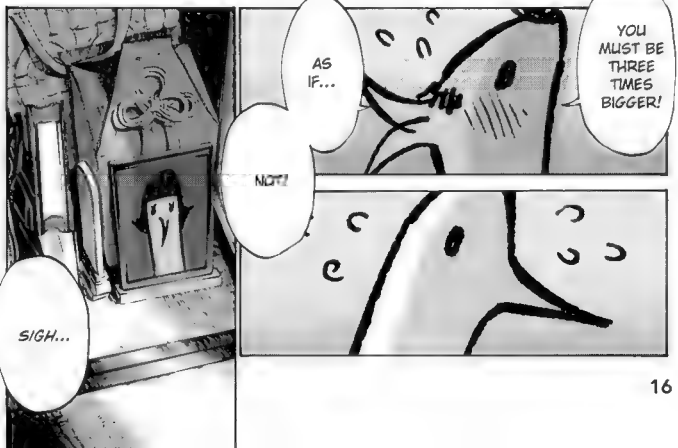
W O H H H H H H H H H

OH NO, WHATEVER YOU HAVE IS FINE!
DON'T GO TO ANY TROUBLE.
...SO WE ONLY HAVE COFFEE AND TEA.
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE COMING ...

WELL, I'M IMPRESSED, YUICHI...
YOUR GIRLFRIEND AKANE IS A REAL LOOKER.
UM, MR. PUNYAMA ...
IT'S MIDORI, NOT AKANE.
AND ...
...WE JUST TOLD YOU WE GOT MARRIED.
OH, OHHH...
...WOW!
OF COURSE YOU TOLD ME!
SORRY, I'VE GOTTEN SO FORGETFUL.


WELL...
YOU KNOW.

PUNPUN...
...YOU'RE SO GROWN-UP.


YOU MUST BE THREE TIMES BIGGER!
AS IF...
NOT!
SIGH...

SO...
...HOW'S HIGH SCHOOL?
ARE YOU GETTING ANY?
LIKE I NEED TO ASK! YOU'RE SUCH A GO-GETTER, PUNPUN.
WHY, WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE, I WAS GOING AT IT SO MUCH WITH AN OLDER WOMAN THAT MY DICK NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO DRY.
UH, UM...
MR. PUNYAMA, ARE YOU STILL WORKING IN FUKUSHIMA?
OH YEAH. I QUIT THE NIGHT WATCHMAN JOB.
NOW I'M WORKING FOR A FRIEND IN SOCIAL SERVICES.
YOU KNOW, I'M JUST AN OLD MAN FROM THE COUNTRY NOW...
THE STARS ARE SO BEAUTIFUL OUT THERE.
YOU SHOULD COME VISIT, AKANE. FUKUSHIMA IS A REALLY NICE PLACE.

Punpun didn't like this at all.

...about adults and their own twisted problems.

Punpun wanted to be open-minded...

...wasn't that big of a deal.

His father neglecting him for years...

...that Punpun kept observing his dad in the hopes of figuring out **why**.

But the poisonous sense of wrongness was so painful...

He was the same funny, kind dad he'd always been.

Nothing had changed much.

His dad's appearance, his voice, his demeanor...

Punpun figured out what had changed the most.

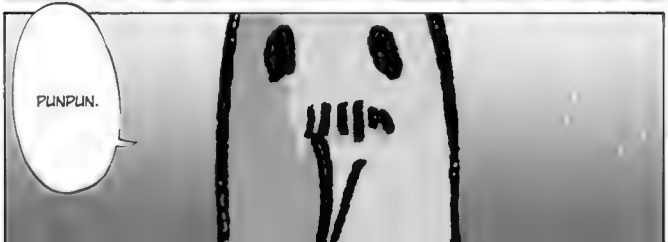
"I see..."

It was
himself.

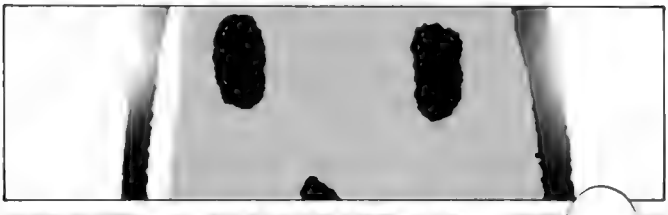
I NEED TO GO TO WORK IN THE MORNING
...SO I CAN'T STAY LONG.
OKAY.
WELL THEN.

SO...
IT'S SO HOT...
...TODAY.
LISTEN TO ME, PUNPUN.
IT'S LIKE...
...THE SUMMER THAT YEAR.

I WANT YOU TO UNDER-STAND THIS...
I'M REALLY NERVOUS RIGHT NOW...
BUT THIS ISN'T A SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT KIND OF THING.

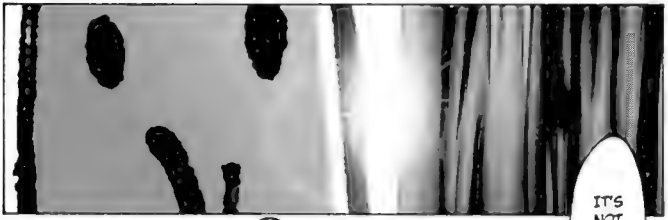

PUNPUN.

DO YOU WANT...
...TO COME LIVE WITH ME IN FUKUSHIMA?



WE CAN HAVE A NEW BEGINNING.
JUST THE TWO OF US.

WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN...
...SUCH GOOD FRIENDS, RIGHT, PUNPUN?



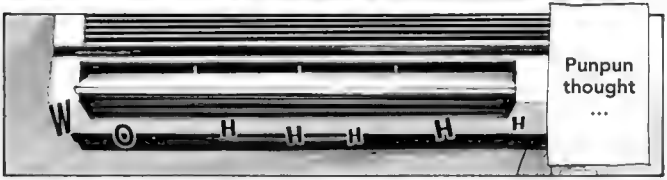
IT'S NOT THAT BAD.
FUKU-SHIMA IS VERY LAID-BACK.

He wanted a new beginning...

But what did he even mean by that?

Punpun...

...wasn't sure what the person sitting in front of him was saying.



Punpun thought ...

...that this guy was full of it.

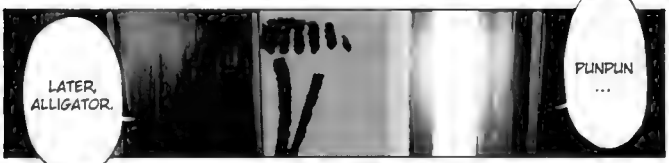
"I...

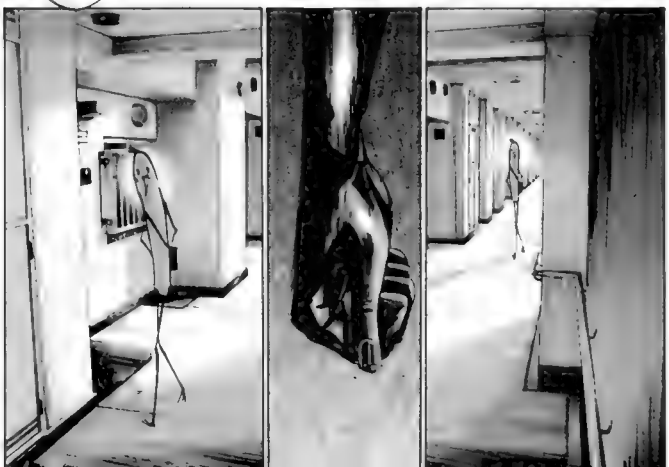
"I'm going to live on my own."

HMM?
YUICHI, DID YOU MAKE THIS CUP?
YOU STILL GOT IT.
NOT REALLY, HA HA HA.
YEAH.
I SEE.

PUNPUN, YOU'VE REALLY GROWN.
...I MEAN...
BUT REALLY ...
AS IF.
YOU MUST BE THREE TIMES BIGGER!
GEEZ.
OH, I SAID THAT ALREADY.
UM...
...WELL, NEVER MIND...
OKAY ...
LET'S GET TO-GETHER AGAIN SOME-TIME.

NO MATTER HOW BIG YOU GET...
...I'M STILL YOUR DAD.


PUNPUN ...
LATER, ALLIGATOR.

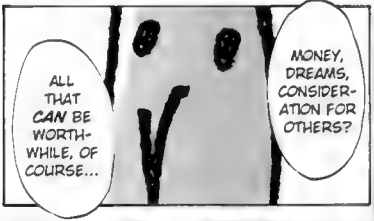


WHAM
WHAM

LET'S...
...TAKE A LITTLE WALK.
ON DAYS LIKE THIS...
...EVEN I GET SENTI-MENTAL.
SIGH...
HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN...
...SINCE WE WALKED, JUST THE TWO OF US?

YOU KNOW, I'VE THOUGHT FOR A LONG TIME...
...THAT YOU AND I ARE ALIKE, PUNPUN.
I THINK I CAN UNDER-STAND YOUR FRUSTRA-TION.
PEOPLE ARE TOO SELFISH.
MY SISTER, YOUR DAD... AND ME TOO, OF COURSE.
BUT YOUR DAD IS SINCERE, DEEP DOWN...
...SO DON'T THINK TOO BADLY OF HIM, OKAY?
YOU DON'T NEED TO PITY HIM.
HE DOESN'T WANT THAT EITHER.

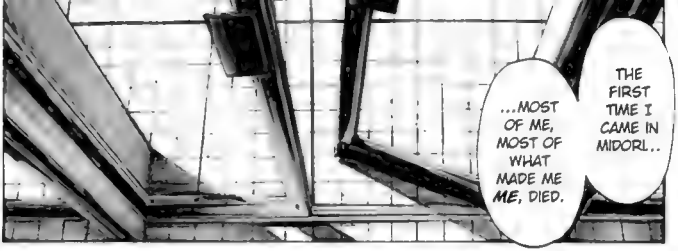
MOST THINGS THAT HAPPEN IN LIFE ARE OF OUR OWN MAKING.
YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW.
RIGHT?


MONEY, DREAMS, CONSIDER-ATION FOR OTHERS?
ALL THAT CAN BE WORTH-WHILE, OF COURSE...

PUNPUN ...
...WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF BEING HUMAN?

BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS RESOLVE.

I WON'T SAY A THING ABOUT YOUR DECISION.
WHETHER YOU BECOME A SHUT-IN OR A MURDERER, IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS.
WHEN YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING TO LIVE ALONE...
...I WAS HONESTLY THRILLED.
REALLY, MY DICK GOT ALL TWISTED UP.
REAL ESTATE
BUT IF YOU DO...
...AND YOU BLAME IT ON OTHER PEOPLE OR YOUR SITUATION ...
...THEN I'LL CUT YOU DOWN WITH A SAMURAI SWORD.
LISTEN CLOSELY, YOU LITTLE SHIT...
LIFE'S SURPRISINGLY FULL OF FREEDOM.
BUT DON'T FORGET, BOY— WITH FREEDOM COMES RESPONSIBILITY.


THE FIRST TIME I CAME IN MIDORI..
...MOST OF ME, MOST OF WHAT MADE ME ME, DIED.

WHEN I DECIDED TO MARRY MIDORI..
...WE TOLD EACH OTHER EVERY-THING.
SO...
...I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED WITH YOU TWO.

I CAN EVEN SAY THAT I LOVE YOU.
BUT I WASN'T ANGRY.
PUNPUN ...
LARK

I THINK...
...LIFE IS SO INTER-ESTING.
THERE ISN'T A SECOND WASTED IN BEING ALIVE.
EVEN A WORTHLESS PIECE OF GARBAGE LIKE ME CAN SOMETIMES FEEL LIKE THAT.
THAT'S HOW I GET THROUGH TODAY...
...AND EVERY OTHER ORDINARY DAY.
DREAMING OF THE DAY MIDORI ENDS MY LIFE.
PUNPUN...
...WHERE ARE YOU PLANNING TO DIE?

AND WHEN IT HAPPENS, WILL YOUR LIFE HAVE BEEN WORTH IT?

THINK...
...PUNPUN.
AND AGONIZE!
THEN MAKE UP YOUR MIND FOR YOURSELF.
EVEN IF YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND...
...AS LONG AS YOU STRIVE TO UNDER-STAND...
...YOU CAN JUST ABOUT HANG ON TO WHO YOU ARE.
THE BORING DAILY GRIND...
...THE USELESS SCENERY...
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN CHANGE IT.
SO, PUNPUN ...
...AS LONG AS YOU REMAIN YOU...

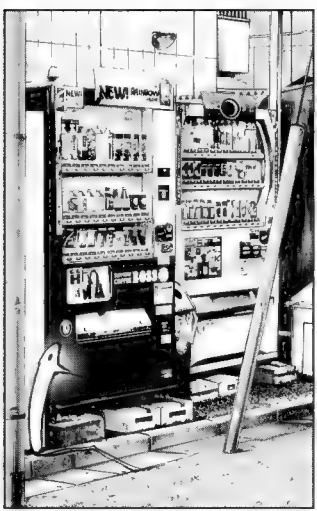
...and melted into the sunset.

The cigarette smoke dispersed listlessly...

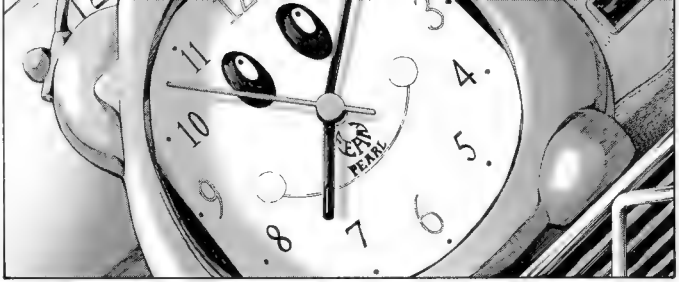
...breathed the smoke in deeply.

...
Punpun
...

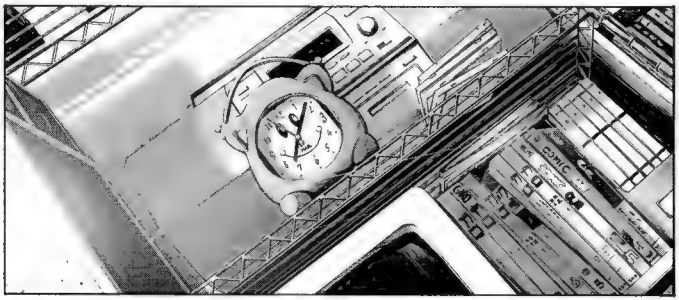
As if to confirm that he could never go back...



Chapter 70



The sound of the second hand ticking deep in his ear.

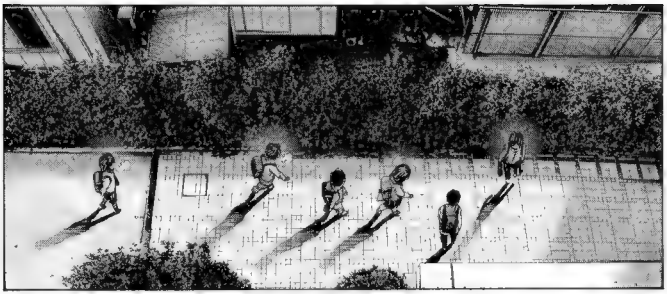


The alarm clock that would go off at 7:10.

The familiar news.

A cardigan and a striped scarf.

The smell of morning.



A group of children going to school, their breath white plumes.

The station platform, a mixture of yawns and sighs.

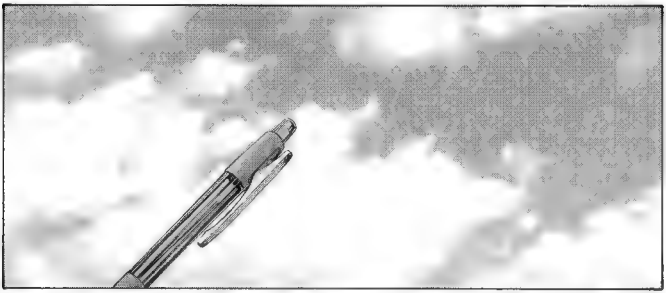
The 7:45 local train.

J-pop leaking from headphones.

Conversations with no substance.

Footsteps running up the stairs.

The hectic sound of locker doors.



The winter sky.

The scratch of pencil on paper.

The familiar classroom.

Someone's lip balm falling off a desk and rolling across the floor.

BUT...
...THIS IS JUST GROUND-WORK FOR MY MAGNIFICENT PLAN.
INDEED, AS SOMEONE WHO PICKED A COLLEGE THAT WOULD LET ME IN ON THE MERIT OF A HIGH SCHOOL RECOMMENDATION, I MAY SEEM SIMPLE TO YOU...

A comic book, in tatters from being shared around.

An answer sheet, balled up and thrown in the trash.

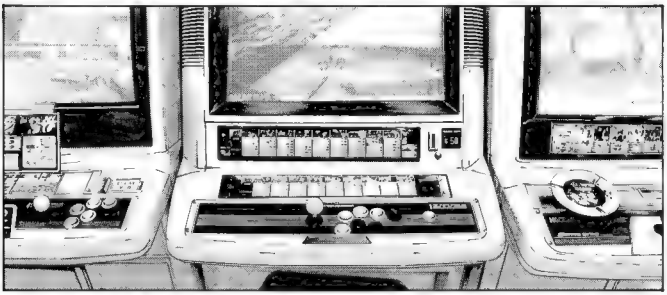
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE?
STUDY. JUST STUDY, YOU IDIOT.
WELL, I SAY THAT, BUT I BET I'M GOING TO END UP WATCHING THE KOHAKU COMPETITION ON TV.
LET'S DECIDE WHERE TO GO FOR OUR GRADUATION TRIP.

The school roof and coffee-flavored milk in a carton.

The after-school silence.

Christmas songs over the store loud-speakers.

The sale bin at the video store.

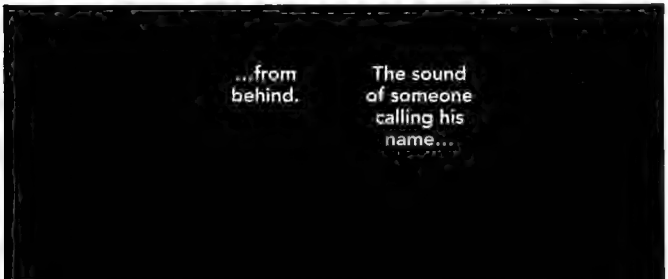


The fifty-cent combat game at the arcade.

People, people, people...

The hustle and bustle of town in December.

...just rushing by.


...from behind.
The sound of someone calling his name...

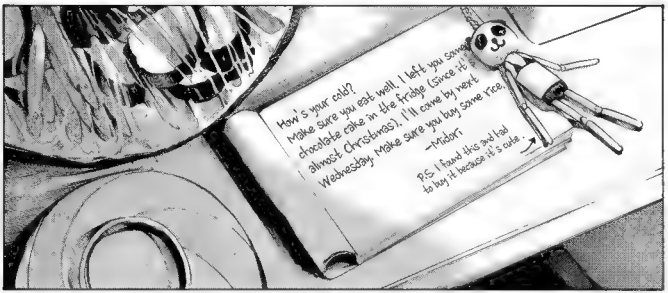
Loneliness.

Freedom.

The manga section of the convenience store.

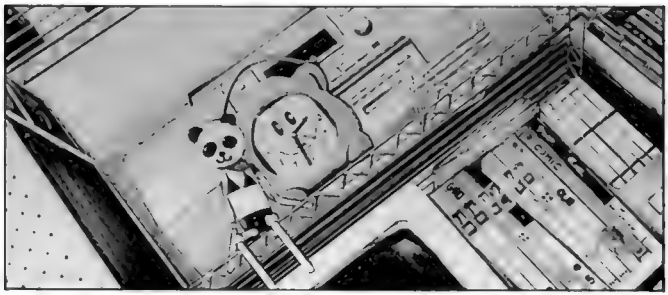
Canned coffee with just a little sugar.

A very dark room.


How's your cold?
Make sure you eat well. I left you some
chocolate cake in the fridge (since it's
almost Christmas). I'll come by next
Wednesday. Make sure you buy some rice.
–Midori
PS: I found this and had
to buy it because it's cute

A cold dinner.

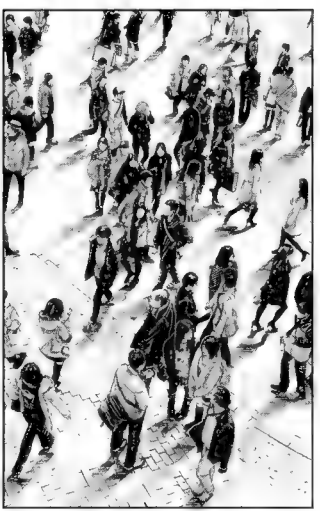
The familiar news.



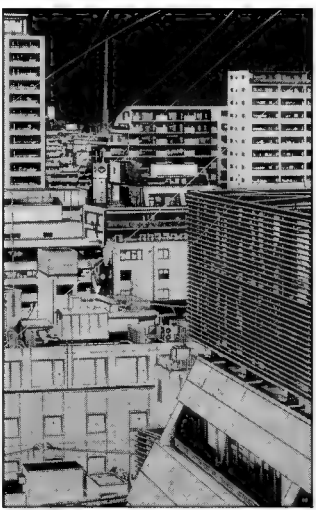
The alarm clock set to 7:10.

Punpun was...

...doing well today.



GOODNIGHT PUNPUN
Part Seven
INIO ASANO



★ Chapter 71 ★

HUFF
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ng
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT ARRIVE AROUND NOW

GOOD VIBRATIONS.
HOW MELLOW ARE YOU TO BE 15 MINUTES LATER?
BUT...
...I MIGHT JUST LOVE YOU DESPITE THAT.

A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR OUR NEW MEMBER.
UM, ACTU-ALLY...
I'D LIKE TO SWALLOW YOU WHOLE.
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF

OH, NICE TO MEET YOU...
I GO BY "PAOPAO CHANNEL" HERE.
MY HOBBY IS FOLLOWING TWEEN IDOLS. BUT I NEVER CROSS THE LINE...
I HOPE WE GET ALONG AND HAVE FUN.

HMM ...
YOU'VE BECOME REALLY ARTICULATE.
WHEN WE FIRST MET, YOU WERE A BIT LIKE DEHYDRATED SEAWEED.

NEVER! DO YOU THINK I CHANGED BECAUSE OF YOU, PEGASUS LEADER?
NO WAY, IT'S THROUGH MY OWN HARD WORK!
I APPLAUD YOU.
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP

WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
HELLO, I'M ECO BAG.
I'M A VISITING PROFESSOR IN THE AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY.
I MET PEGASUS AT A MODERN DANCE CLASS.
MAY I DANCE FOR YOU TODAY?
YO!, YO!
TOMP
TOMP
THAT'S GREAT!
NO WONDER SHE'S OUR HEROINE.

MY NAME IS WHITE PIG, AND I'M A SALES CLERK.
DID YOU KNOW THAT ALL GIRLS CAN DO A SPECIAL KIND OF MAGIC?
WAIT FOR MY ANNUAL SUMMER BARBECUE.

I'M CALLED "IT'S AWKWARD WHEN YOU ONLY HAVE ONE BATTERY LEFT."
I WORK AS A WEB DESIGNER AND ALSO PUBLISH A COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER.
I WOULD LOVE TO DISCUSS OOPARTS AND CRYPTOID MEGA-ORGANISMS WITH YOU.

I'M INFINITE LOVE.
I'M 26 YEARS OLD AND I WORK PART-TIME.
CONTRARY TO APPEAR-ANCES, I'M PRETTY GOOD AT ANYTHING SPORTY.
I'VE BEEN TO THE NATIONAL SWIMMING CHAMPION-SHIPS.

I'M BUTT HAM-BURGER.
I'M GOING TO SCHOOL TO BECOME A VOICE-OVER ACTRESS.
MY VOICE MAY BE ANNOYINGLY ANIME, BUT IT'S JUST HOW I SPEAK NATURALLY. SORRY ABOUT THAT.

I AM GUARDIAN ANGEL GIBOBOGIGI.
POTTERY IS MY HOBBY. I HAVE TWO CHILDREN.
I'M SO HAPPY TO BECOME FRIENDS WITH SOMEONE AS YOUNG AS YOU.

I'M CONTRARY TO...
I USED TO BE IN A GANG AND GOT INTO LOADS OF TROUBLE, BUT I'M A DELIVERYMAN NOW AND I DRIVE SUPER CAREFULLY.
EVERYONE HERE IS REALLY NICE...
...SO COME JOIN US, BABY.

I'M BIG BRO MUHOMUHO SWEET PRETTY LONELY HEART.
I WORK AS A MATH TEACHER AT A FAMOUS CRAM SCHOOL, WHICH SHALL REMAIN NAMELESS.
I'VE KNOWN PEGASUS SINCE WE WERE IN COLLEGE, SO A LONG, LONG TIME.
NO NEED TO BE NERVOUS! IT'S NOT THAT DIFFERENT FROM A COLLEGE JOKE CLUB.

SO JUMP RIGHT IN...
WE...
...ENTHUSI-ASTICALLY WELCOME YOU!

SO ...
...NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.
LET'S HEAR HOW YOU SOUND.

WEL-
COME
TO...
...THE
PEGASUS
ENSEMBLE.

I-
I'M...
...YUMI
NUMATA.
UM...
I'M
STARTING
COLLEGE IN
THE SPRING,
STUDYING TO
BECOME AN
ACCOUNTANT.

I
BROKE
UP WITH
MY BOY-
FRIEND
THIS
WINTER
...
...AND I'VE
JUST FELT
REALLY
UNSETTLED.
WHAT'S
THE POINT
OF LIVING IN
A USELESS
WORLD LIKE
THIS?
BUT...

MAYBE THE WORLD ISN'T USELESS ...
...MAYBE IT'S ME.
...AND I HAD A REVELATION.
...ONE NIGHT I REALIZED I WAS SURROUNDED BY A WHITE LIGHT...

I THOUGHT, "MAYBE THIS ISN'T A COINCIDENCE"...
...AND "SOMEONE LIKE THIS COULD BE THE GOD TO GUIDE ME."
HIS AURA, HIS PRESENCE ...
THE NEXT DAY, PEGASUS SPOKE TO ME ON THE STREET.

WE WILL NOW...
... PERFORM A SONG FOR YOU.
ACTUALLY, AS OF TODAY, YOU ARE PRINCESS PUSSY.
OKAY, YUMI...
I'M NOT STUPID ENOUGH TO WANT SOMEONE CALLING ME A GOD.
STOP IT.

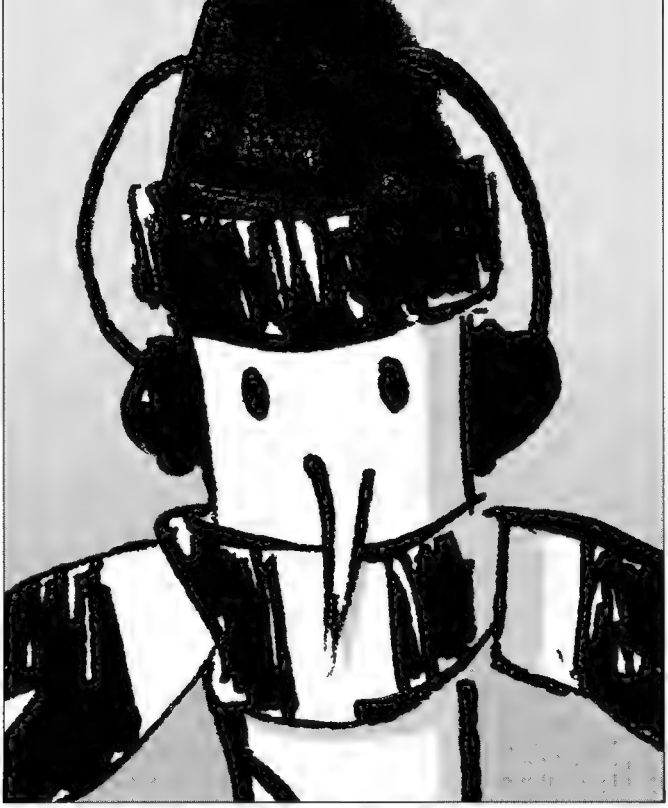
WE AREN'T ...
...A RELIGION OR A SELF-HELP GROUP.
IT'S JUST AN ENDLESSLY PURE AND INNOCENT ...
...PURSUIT OF LOVE, PEACE AND HUMANITY.

TWO MORE TO FIND...
...IN TWO YEARS BEFORE IT HAPPENS.
WILL YOU FOLLOW PEGASUS?

I WANT TO SEE...
...THE MOON.
FLICK

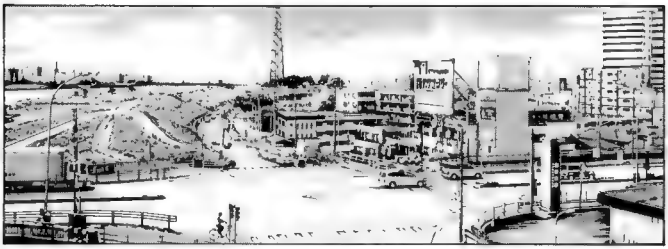
GOOD
VIBRATIONS.

Chapter 72



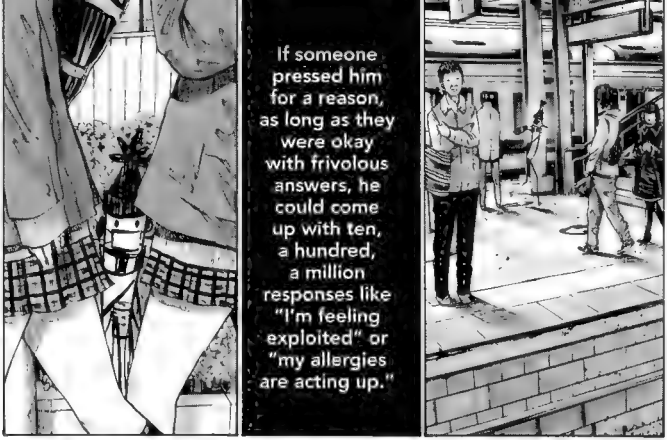
Punpun was...

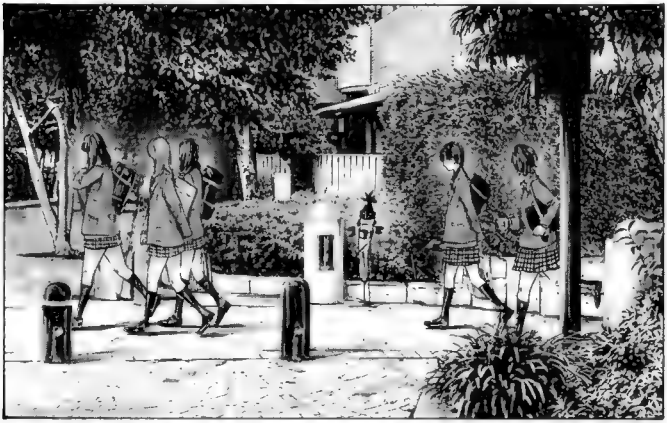
...really unhappy about going to work.



He just felt overwhelmingly sluggish.

There was no particular reason why.

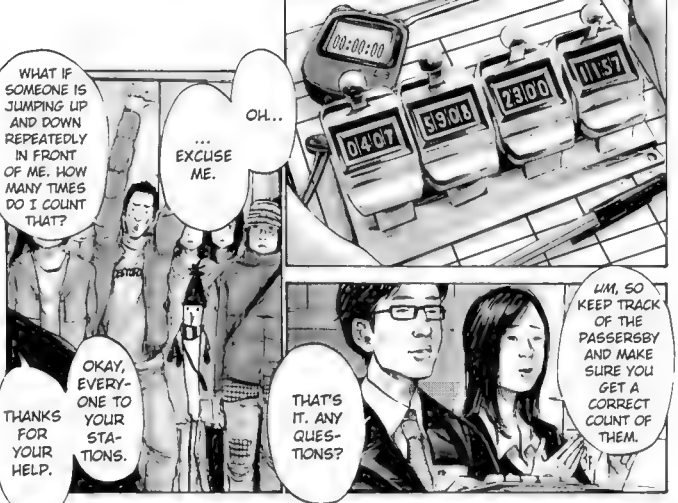

If someone pressed him for a reason, as long as they were okay with frivolous answers, he could come up with ten, a hundred, a million responses like "I'm feeling exploited" or "my allergies are acting up."

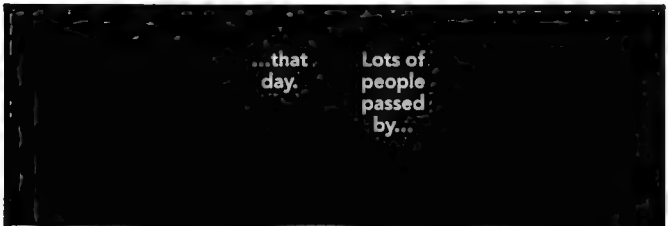


... called people who said things like that "trash."
But he was pretty sure that society...

WHOOOOA, ONOTTI!
YOU JIKUJION!
YOU ASSHOLE, YOU SON OF A BITCH!
I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE GRADUATION.
HOW'VE YOU BEEN? YOU LOOK A LITTLE PALE. ARE YOU OKAY?

4F
HUH? YOU'RE TAKING WALKS EVERY DAY?
EVER SINCE I GOT INTO COLLEGE, MY DICK HASN'T HAD A CHANCE TO DRY OFF...
WELL, THAT'S THE IDEAL I STRIVE FOR EVERY DAY.
WHY DON'T YOU FORGO THE "NO MASTURBATION" RULE AND TURN OFF ENLIGHTENMENT FOR A NIGHT?
YOU'RE LIKE A GRANDPA, MAN.
SINCE YOU OWE ME FOR GETTING YOU THIS PART-TIME JOB, LET'S FIND SOME GIRLS AND MAKE THEM SCREAM.


00:00:00
0467
3906
2300
0137
UM, SO KEEP TRACK OF THE PASSERSBY AND MAKE SURE YOU GET A CORRECT COUNT OF THEM.
THAT'S IT. ANY QUESTIONS?
OH...
... EXCUSE ME.
WHAT IF SOMEONE IS JUMPING UP AND DOWN REPEATEDLY IN FRONT OF ME. HOW MANY TIMES DO I COUNT THAT?
OKAY, EVERY-ONE TO YOUR STA-TIONS.
THANKS FOR YOUR HELP.


...that day.
Lots of people passed by...

...DON'T YOU FEEL A LITTLE BAD JUST LIVING OFF YOUR MOM'S SAVINGS?
WHY DON'T YOU RENT A ROOM BY YOURSELF LIKE ME? I'M SURE IT WOULD CHANGE YOUR WORLDVIEW.
WELL ...
...I HAVE NO INTENTION OF INTERFERING WITH YOUR PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE, BUT...

...or some depressed by irrevocable guilt.

...some with serious illnesses...

...some with major problems at home...

Among the pedestrians passing by were bound to be...

OKAY, I'LL GIVE HER TWO POINTS.
THE ONES ON EITHER SIDE OF HER ARE ABOUT HALF A POINT EACH, SO TOGETHER THEY'RE A POINT.
WOO!
I JUST SPOTTED A TOTAL HARD-ON BABE.

For now, best to play the fool.

No, no, don't think anymore.

...there Punpun was, feeling unsettled for no reason.

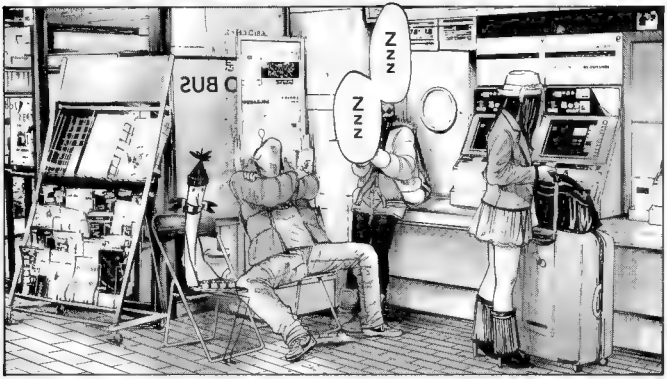
And yet...

Well, of course not. They were all confidently moving forward.

No one would help him. No one would meet his gaze.

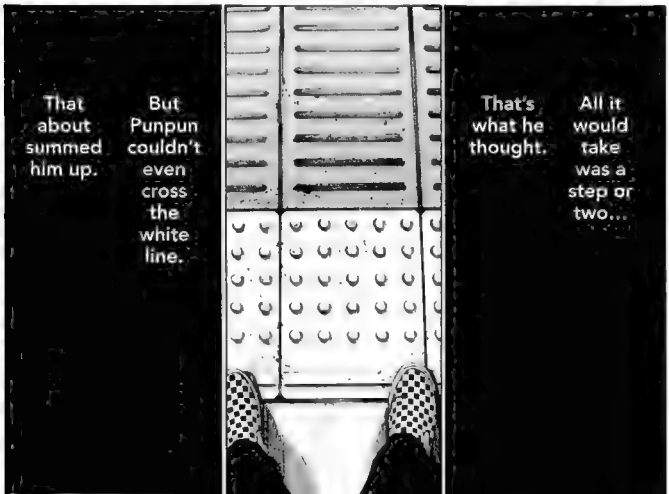
Who was he looking for?

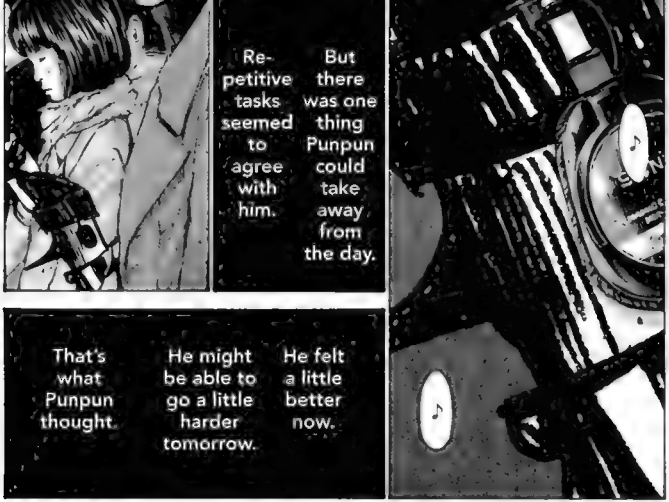
For some reason, Punpun was following them as they went back and forth, as if he was clinging to something.



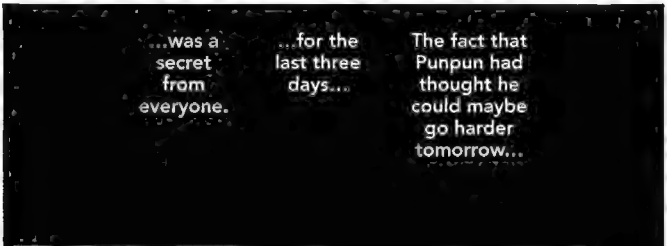
...Punpun was still hypersensitive to the north wind.

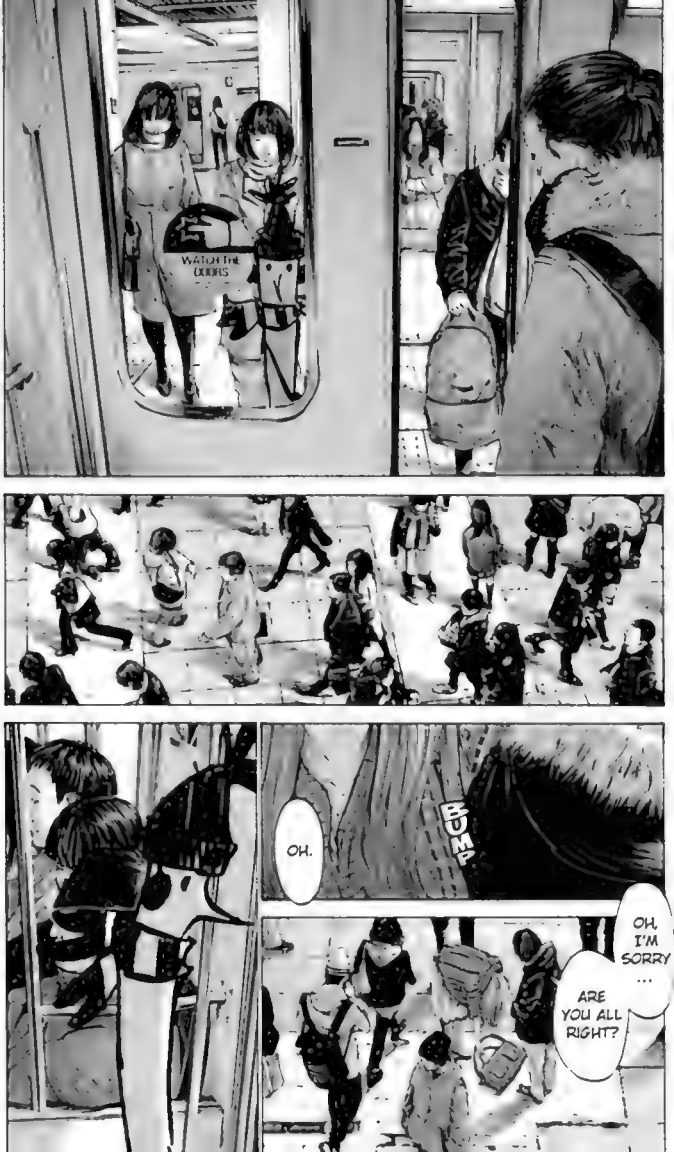
Even though a breath of spring was starting to seep into the breeze...


That about summed him up.
But Punpun couldn't even cross the white line.
That's what he thought.
All it would take was a step or two...


Re-petitive tasks seemed to agree with him.
But there was one thing Punpun could take away from the day.
That's what Punpun thought.
He might be able to go a little harder tomorrow.
He felt a little better now.

SHUUUU


...was a secret from everyone.
...for the last three days...
The fact that Punpun had thought he could maybe go harder tomorrow...


WATCH THE DOORS
OH.
OH, I'M SORRY ...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

THE DOORS ARE CLOSING.

NEXT STOP: ALL LIVING THINGS OF THE EARTH.

TRUSTWORTHY

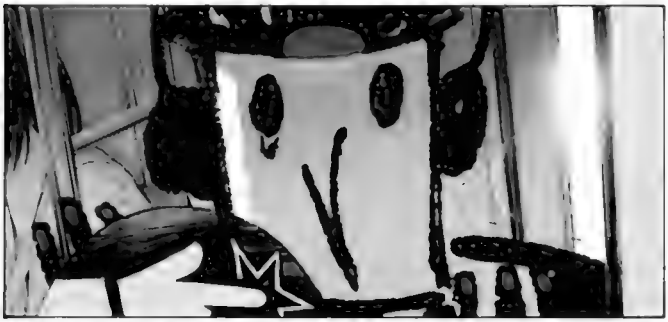
WATCH THE
DOORS
PRIORITY
SEATING

It's
Aiko.

Chapter 73

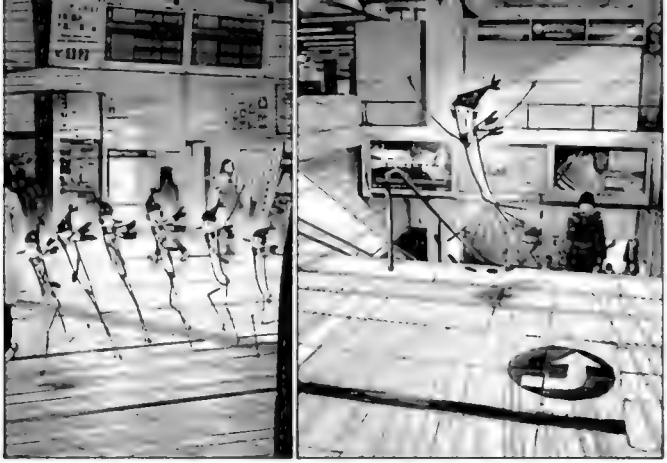
It's
Aiko!!

RUMB
RUMB
RUMB
RUMB
RUMB



It's Aiko!
It's Aiko!
It's Aiko!

It's
Aiko.



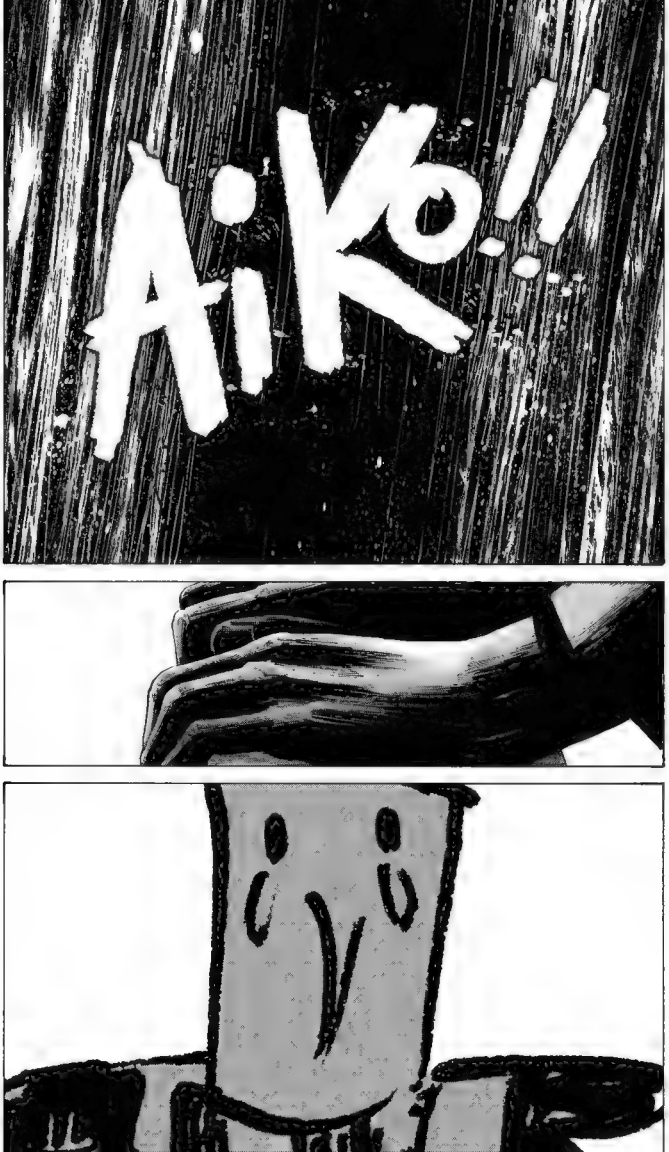
EXCELLENT
DOORS ARE CLOSING.

Aiko.

女性専用車
WOMEN ONLY CAR

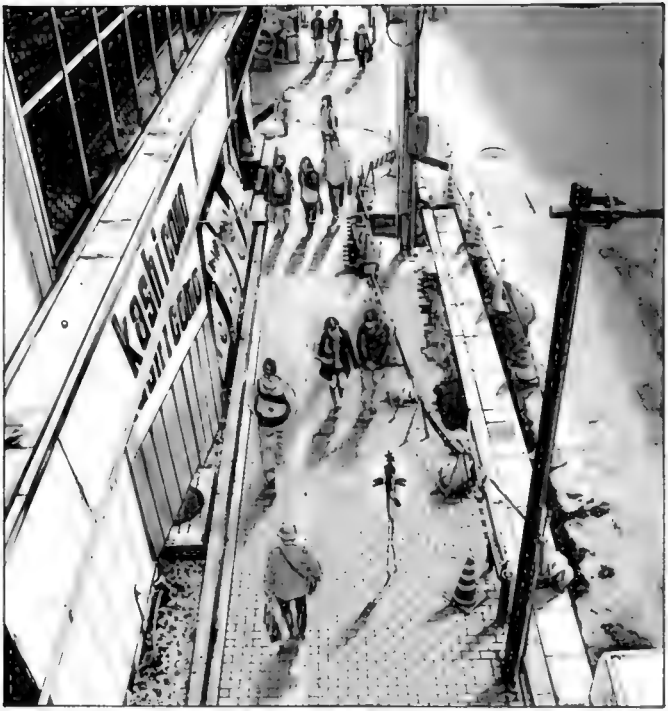
DASH
Aiko?
DASH
DASH
DASH

4
SWOOSH
Aiko!
のりこし精算
Fare Adjustment
CLICK
CLICK
SPLAT
Aiko!
Aiko!

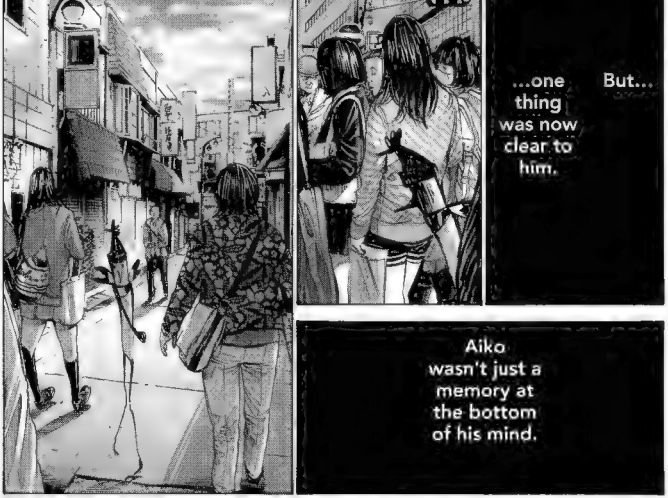

Aiko!!

BASEMENT
HOPPING
TAXES, U A SAFE AND SIMPLE DIRECT TRANSFER.
AVINGS AND TAX ASSOCIATION

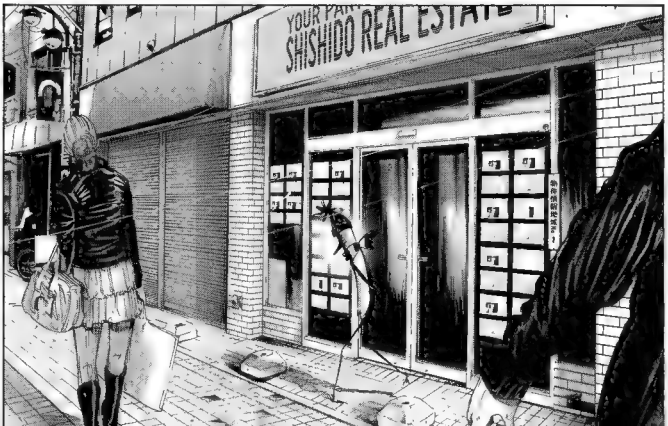
He
couldn't...



...find
Aiko.


But...
...one thing was now clear to him.
Aiko wasn't just a memory at the bottom of his mind.

Pretty obvious.
...just like he had.
...she had spent her time existing somewhere...
For the past several years...


SHISHIDO REAL ESTATE

Aiko...

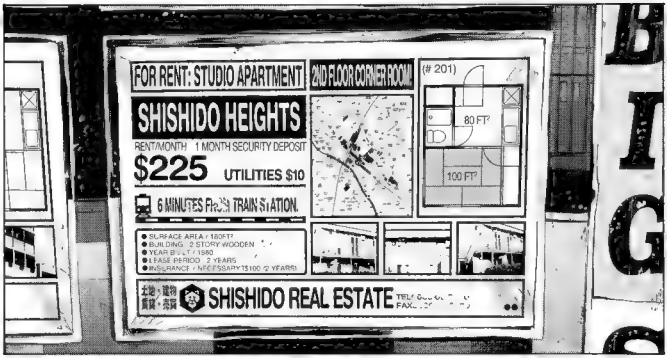
...and live somewhere in town.

(unlike someone else Punpun knew)

...must be a proper grown-up now...

...in the last few years?

What had he done...



...so what was he so afraid of?

Nothing would happen if he just waited around...

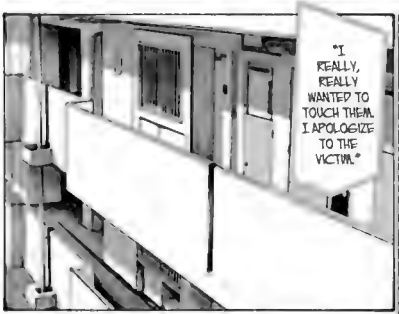
He didn't have anything to lose.

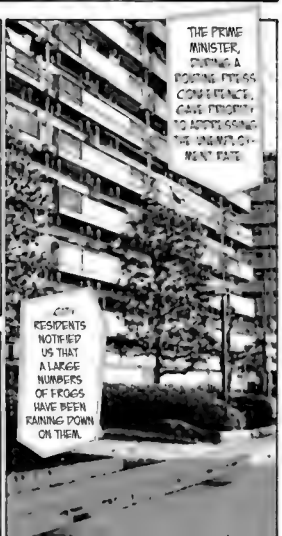
COME IN AND HAVE A SEAT ANYWHERE YOU LIKE.
OH...
...HELLO THERE.

HMMM. WELL, I CAN SHOW IT TO YOU.
HMM?
THE STUDIO FOR ¢225?

Chapter 74

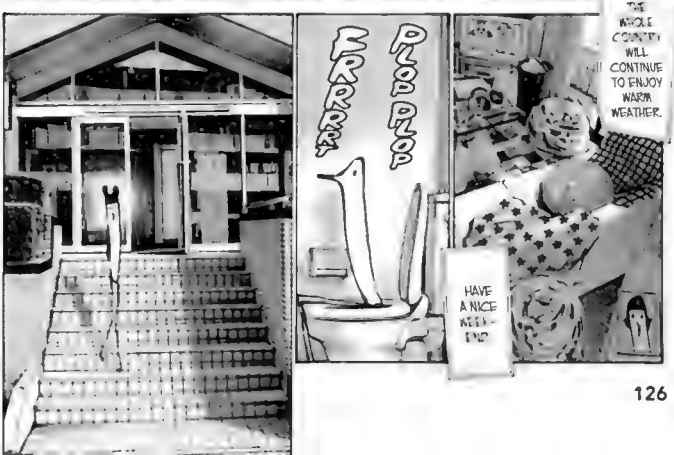
THE SUSPECT, AGE 35, UPON BEING QUESTIONED BY THE POLICE...
...STATED THAT, "I LOST MY TEMPER AND STABBED HIM. I DIDN'T MEAN TO KILL HIM."


"I REALLY, REALLY WANTED TO TOUCH THEM. I APOLOGIZE TO THE VICTIM."


THE PRIME MINISTER, DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE, GAVE PRIORITY TO ADDRESSING THE UNUSUAL INCIDENT.
RESIDENTS NOTIFIED US THAT A LARGE NUMBERS OF FROGS HAVE BEEN RAINING DOWN ON THEM.

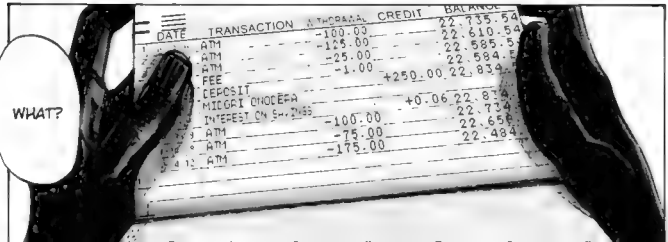
803 ONODERA
...OUR GUEST TODAY! HER LATEST SONG HAS BEEN RISING IN THE CHARTS...

WE APOLOGIZE FOR THE INAPPROPRIATE COMMENTS MADE DURING THIS PROGRAM.


THE WHOLE COUNTRY WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY WARM WEATHER.
HAVE A NICE WEEK-END
PLOP PLOP
FRRRRT

HOHO BANK
CARD SERVICE
MACHINES IN THIS BRANCH
THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING US.

MERE


WHAT?
DATE TRANSACTION WITHDRAWAL CREDIT BALANCE
ATM -100.00 22,735.54
ATM -125.00 22,610.54
ATM -25.00 22,585.54
ATM -1.00 22,584.54
FEE
DEPOSIT +250.00 22,834.54
MICORI CHOCOLA +0.06 22,834.60
INTEREST ON S... 22,734.60
ATM -100.00 22,656.60
ATM -75.00 22,484.60
ATM -175.00

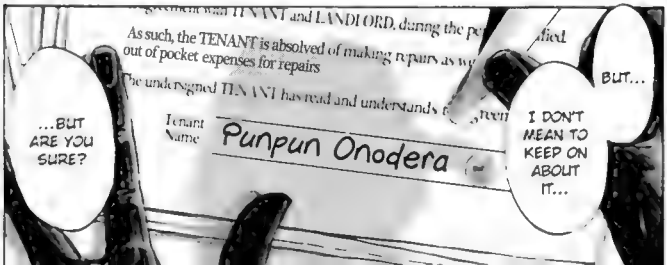
YOU'RE KIDDING ...
YOU ALREADY PICKED OUT A PLACE?
WHY DIDN'T YOU TALK TO ME ABOUT IT FIRST?
OF COURSE ...
...IF YOU'VE THOUGHT IT THROUGH CAREFULLY, I WON'T SAY ANYTHING, BUT...
... UMMM.
HEY ...
...SAY SOME-THING, YUICHI!
OKAY!
I'M THE STRONGEST GUY IN THE U.S.A.!

I'VE BEEN WORRIED ABOUT YOU PAYING RENT FOR THAT APARTMENT ON YOUR OWN.
SWISH SWISH
SO I'VE BEEN THINKING... WHY DON'T YOU COME LIVE IN OFUNA?
HMM?
ISN'T THIS FOR YOUR MOM'S SAVINGS ACCOUNT?
YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE A REAL JOB YET...
ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT ME TO HANG ON TO THIS?
ARE YOU SURE?
YOU'RE NOT JUST BEING IMPUL-SIVE?
"Not at all. I'm fine."

DEIBPO
WE BUY AND SELL!
SOFAP

DID YOU BRING YOUR I.D. AND THE DEPOSIT?
HAVE A SEAT AND I'LL EXPLAIN THE LEASE TO YOU.
OH...
HI, THERE.
YOUR PARTNER IN
SHISHIDO REAL ESTA

OH, STAMP THERE TOO...
WE MANAGE THE PROPERTY, SO IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, WE CAN DEAL WITH IT RIGHT AWAY, SO THAT'S CONVENIENT.
WELL ...
...IT'S CLOSE TO THE STATION AND WE'RE CHARGING CONSIDERABLY BELOW MARKET VALUE...


...BUT ARE YOU SURE?
Tenant Name
Punpun Onodera
BUT...
I DON'T MEAN TO KEEP ON ABOUT IT...

That was the first time Punpun had signed a contract.

It was such a simple thing, but it made him feel a little more grown-up.

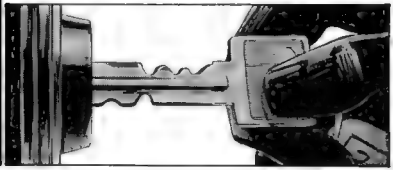
He'd heard it all before.

Newbie, creepy, overly sensitive loser...

He wouldn't even care if someone called him names now.

...but Punpun had never thought that he could be so proactive.

His motives were suspect...

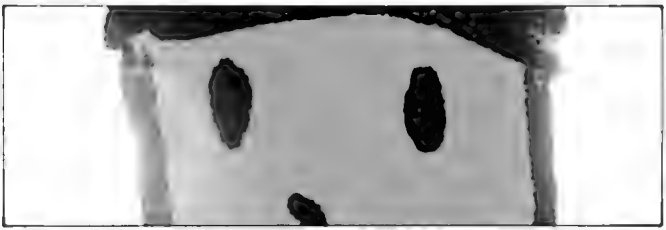


...with a little key.

...opened quickly and easily...

The flimsy door to the cheap studio apartment...

WELCOME HOME.
OH ...
HI, PUNPUN.



This apartment...

...was to share with Aiko.

But even if Punpun could find Aiko...

...he could easily picture himself being incapable of doing anything about it.

But that wasn't a big problem.

He...

...couldn't find the right words.

But he was just going to have to.

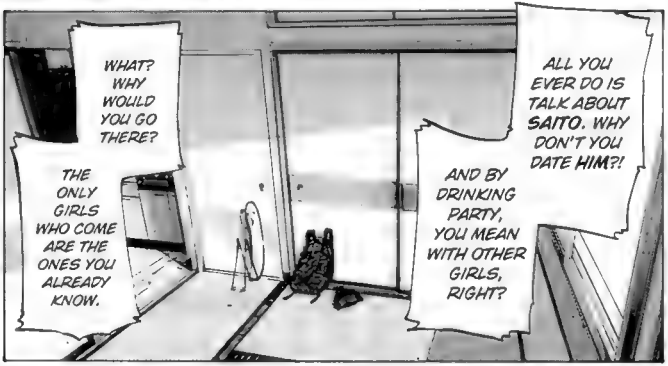
WHOA!

OH ...
WELCOME HOME. YOU STARTLED ME.
WAIT ...
I'M THE ONE WHO'S STARTLED. LET ME KNOW IF YOU'RE COMING OVER.

OH ...
... SORRY.
DID YOU MAKE ME DINNER?
I ALREADY ATE WITH SAITO AND SOME OTHER GUYS.

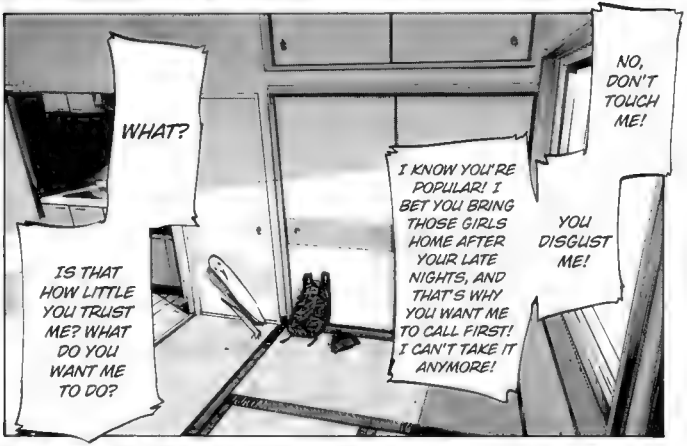
OKAY ...
I'LL THROW IT AWAY THEN.
WHAT? DON'T BE MAD!
I TOLD YOU I'D BE LATE BECAUSE I HAD A FUTSAL GAME.

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE COMING OVER.
AND YOU KNOW HOW IT GOES WHEN I'M OUT WITH SAITO. IT USUALLY TURNS INTO A DRINKING PARTY.
I KNOW ...
...BUT YOU DIDN'T SAY YOU WERE GOING TO BE THIS LATE.

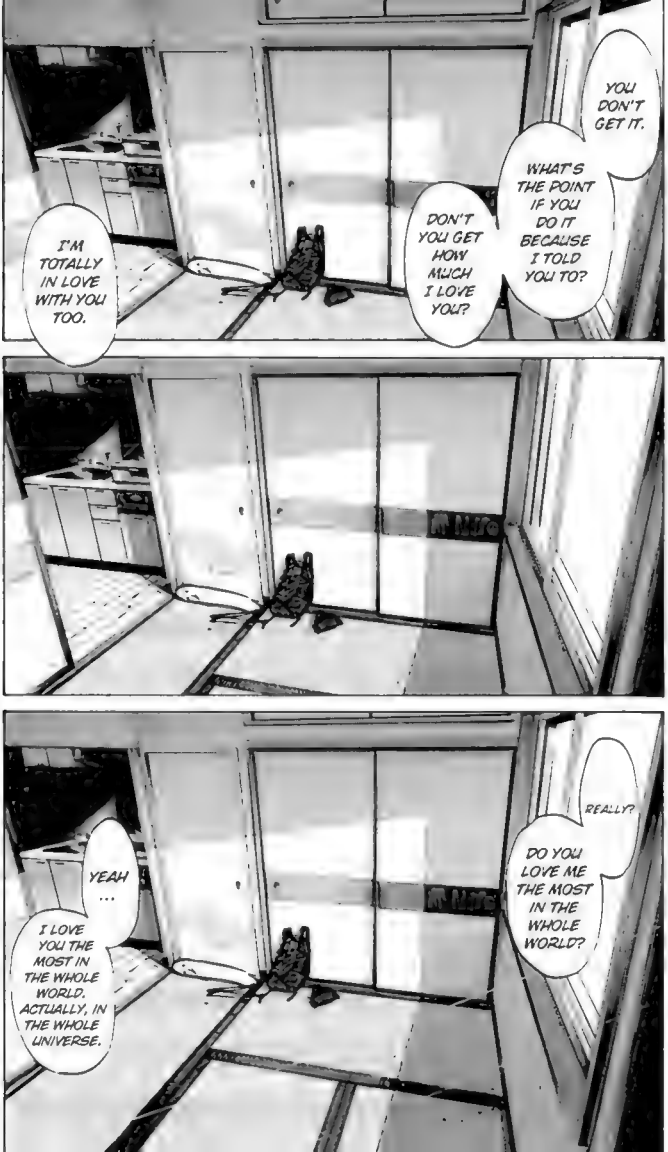

WHAT? WHY WOULD YOU GO THERE?
THE ONLY GIRLS WHO COME ARE THE ONES YOU ALREADY KNOW.
ALL YOU EVER DO IS TALK ABOUT SAITO. WHY DON'T YOU DATE HIM?!
AND BY DRINKING PARTY, YOU MEAN WITH OTHER GIRLS, RIGHT?

PROOF? WHAT ARE YOU, A KID?
STOP BEING AN IDIOT.
PROOF.
DO YOU HAVE PROOF?

DON'T CALL ME AN IDIOT...
YOU KNOW I HATE THAT MORE THAN ANYTHING ...
SORRY, I TOOK IT TOO FAR...
OKAY, PUT DOWN THAT KNIFE.

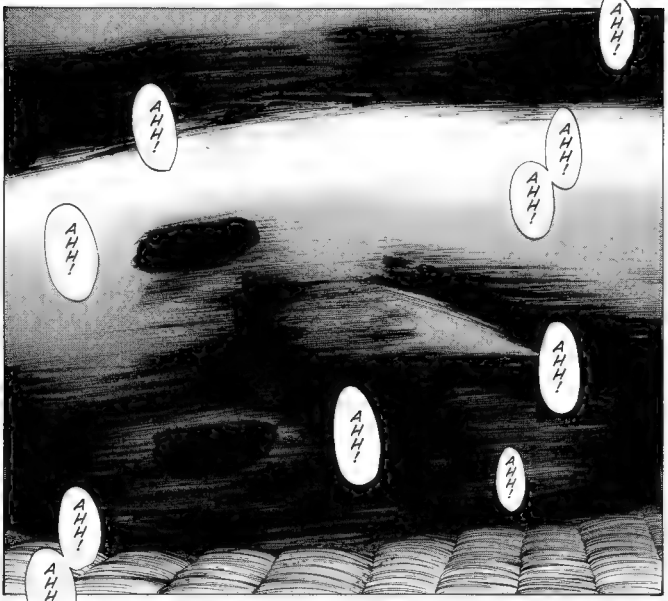

NO, DON'T TOUCH ME!
YOU DISGUST ME!
I KNOW YOU'RE POPULAR! I BET YOU BRING THOSE GIRLS HOME AFTER YOUR LATE NIGHTS, AND THAT'S WHY YOU WANT ME TO CALL FIRST! I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!
WHAT?
IS THAT HOW LITTLE YOU TRUST ME? WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?

I REALLY CAN'T STAND IT...
THE FACT THAT YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW IS THE WORST ...
YOU USED TO SAY "I LOVE YOU" ALL THE TIME AND STROKE MY HAIR, BUT NOW I'M THE ONE WHO HAS TO KISS YOU.
ALL RIGHT ...
I CAN DO THAT.


I'M TOTALLY IN LOVE WITH YOU TOO.
DON'T YOU GET HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU?
WHAT'S THE POINT IF YOU DO IT BECAUSE I TOLD YOU TO?
YOU DON'T GET IT.
I LOVE YOU THE MOST IN THE WHOLE WORLD. ACTUALLY, IN THE WHOLE UNIVERSE.
YEAH ...
DO YOU LOVE ME THE MOST IN THE WHOLE WORLD?
REALLY?

...that the couple next door was ugly.

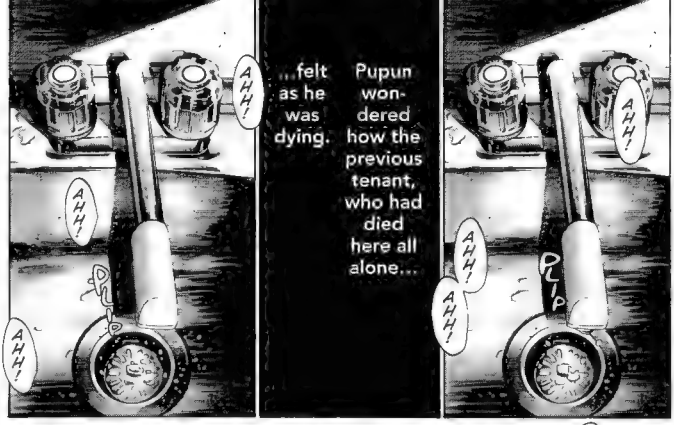
Purrpun hoped from the bottom of his heart...

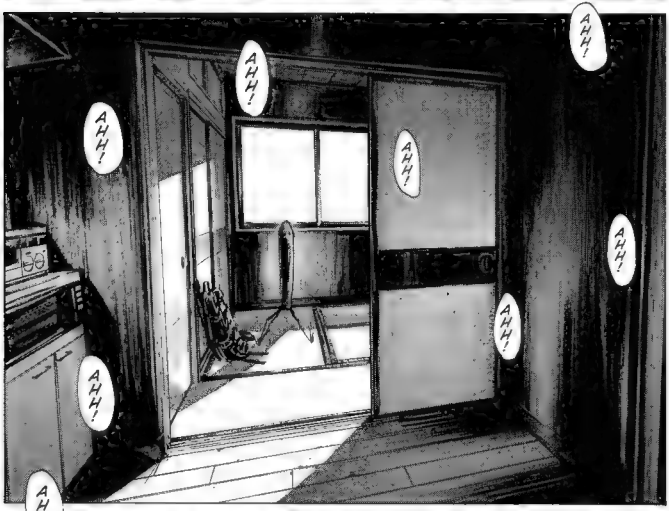


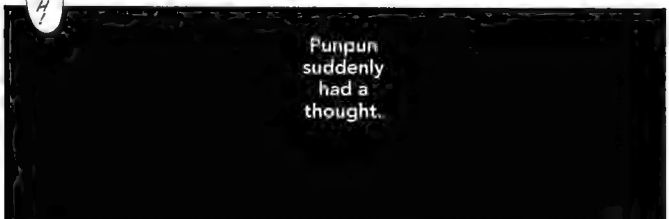
...if they weren't.

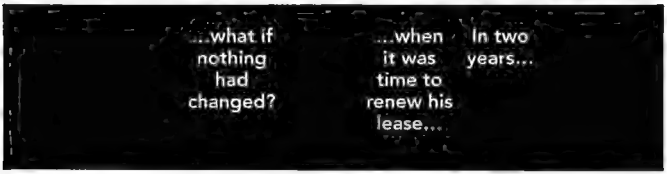
...he didn't think he could take it...

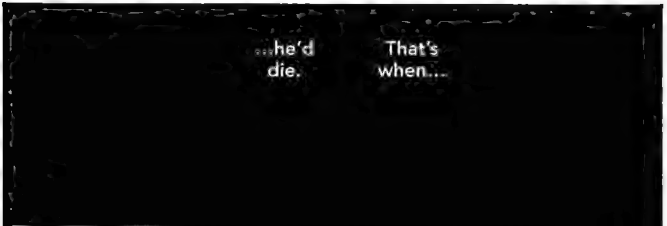
Actually...


AHH!
AHH!
AHH!
...felt as he was dying.
Pupun wondered how the previous tenant, who had died here all alone...
AHH!
AHH!
AHH!
PUP


AHH!
AHH!
AHH!
AHH!
AHH!
AHH!
AHH!
AHH!


Punpun suddenly had a thought.

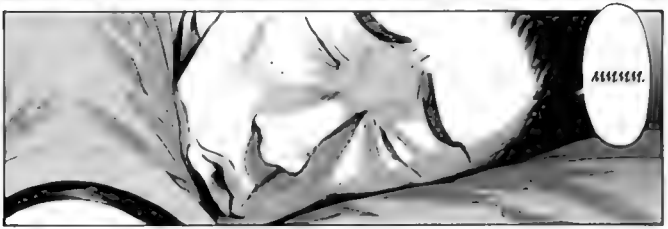

...what if nothing had changed?
...when it was time to renew his lease,...
In two years...


...he'd die.
That's when...

Chapter 75

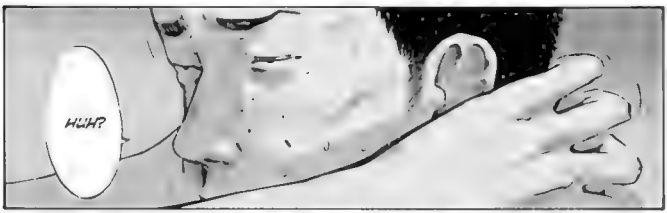
NYAM NYAM.

I WANT MUSCLES SO BIG THEY'RE ABOUT TO BURST...
... NYAM NYAM.


AAAAAAAH.

THERE'S SOMETHING ONLY YOU CAN DO.
THERE IS...
OUR VIBRATIONS ARE MATCHED AT A LONG SEVEN DEGREES
HERE...
COME WITH ME AND FLY AWAY INTO THE VAST UNIVERSE.
OH...
SORRY.
I HAVE TO WORK TODAY

I'M SO HARD-CORE I STILL WORK MY ABS EVEN WHEN I'M CRUNCHED FOR TIME!
AH HA HA HA!
OH CRAP!
I'M LATE!
SHIP
SHIP


HUH?

AHH!
AHH!
AHH!
AHH!
AHH!

AHH!
RRRRR
RRRRR
I'M NOT IN RIGHT NOW.
RRR...
CHAK
PLEASE LEAVE YOUR NAME AND MESSAGE AFTER THE TONE.

OHHH OH OH OH, PUNPUN!
DON'T BE NERVOUS. LET'S JUST STAY ALIVE, OH OH OH!
YO...
GOOD JOB, SUNSHINE!
IT'S STILL THE DEAD OF NIGHT, BUT YOU KNOW, THE SUN ALWAYS RISES...
SO, ONOTTI, HOW WAS YOUR FIRST DAY?

HEY, ONOTTI, I NEED TO TELL YOU ABOUT MY PROBLEM.
HONESTLY, I THINK MY ABS ARE ABOUT THE THIRD CUTEST IN THE WORLD.
I CAN'T FIND A HONEY WORTHY OF THESE ABS AT SCHOOL.
SHIT, I'LL NEVER FIND A GIRLFRIEND THIS WAY.

WHAT ?
SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT?
ACCORDING TO GUIN-NESS, THE BIGGEST BOOBS ARE SIXTY INCHES AROUND?
W-WHOA, ARE YOU SERIOUS?
THAT'S AS TALL AS MY MOM.

I SEE, HMMM ...
I FEEL STRONGLY THAT YOU'VE SIDETRACKED ME, BUT YOU'RE RIGHT, THERE ARE STILL MANY UNKNOWNS IN THE WORLD.
IT IS LITERALLY A MYSTERIOUS ADVENTURE.
SPEAKING OF, I JUST HAD A REALLY STRANGE DREAM.
MY ROOM WAS SUDDENLY FILLED WITH A GODLY LIGHT.

WHEN I CAME TO, A PINK ELEPHANT, OR MAYBE IT WAS A GIRL IN A SEE-THROUGH BIKINI...
ANYWAY I CAN'T REMEMBER THE SHAPE IT TOOK, BUT AN UNBELIEVABLY HUGE PRESENCE SPOKE TO ME.
ESSENTIALLY IT SAID, "YOU HAVE SOMETHING YOU NEED TO DO..."
AT THAT MOMENT, A DIVINE REVELATION ENTERED MY SOUL.

WHO KNEW?
I'VE BEEN CHOSEN BY GOD.
HEY, LISTEN CLOSELY, YOU CAN ALMOST HEAR THE CRIES OF PEOPLE BEGGING FOR HELP...
MIMURA, YOU IDIOT, WHY DIDN'T YOU REALIZE IT SOONER?

HEY...
WHAT'S WITH THAT FROZEN EXPRESSION, ONOTTI?
DON'T BE LIKE THAT. I'LL CRY!

...I'VE BEEN REALLY WORRIED RECENTLY.
I'M STUDYING ECONOMICS, BUT APPARENTLY I HAVE ZERO INTEREST IN IT.
YEAH...
BUT ALL KIDDING ASIDE...
AS SOON AS I MADE THAT DECISION, IT'S LIKE A FOG LIFTED ...
...AND A FRIGHTENINGLY STRAIGHT ROAD APPEARED IN FRONT OF ME.
MY PARENTS ARE TEACHERS, RIGHT?
SO I THOUGHT, SCREW IT, I'LL JUST GET A TEACHING CERTIFICATE.
IS IT OKAY FOR MY LIFE TO TAKE SUCH A SIMPLE PATH?
PART OF ME WANTS A REALLY DYNAMIC LIFE, YOU KNOW?
BUT...
...WHY DO I STILL FEEL BAD?

I ENVY YOU, ONOTTI.
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THAT.
YOU KNOW, FREE, NOT BELONGING ANYWHERE.
YOU'RE SO COOL, AND YOU NEVER SEEM TO HAVE ANY WORRIES.
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY INSECURITIES? HOW ARE YOU SO CONFIDENT?

MAYBE THAT'S THE DEFINITION OF COOL, ONOTTI.
IT'S YOUR ATTITUDE, LIKE YOU'RE A FIERCE GOD. I SERIOUSLY RESPECT THAT.
BUT I WANT TO CHASE DREAMS.

THAT'S RIGHT...
THE YOUNG NEED DREAMS.
I'LL MAKE THE BARE ABS LOOK A THING AND BECOME THE MASTER OF STREET FASHION.
THEN I'LL BECOME THE FACE OF DAYTIME TV AND HAVE A HOT POT RESTAURANT IN AKASAKA.

...about having dreams that would never come true.

Punpun didn't want to think...

SEE?

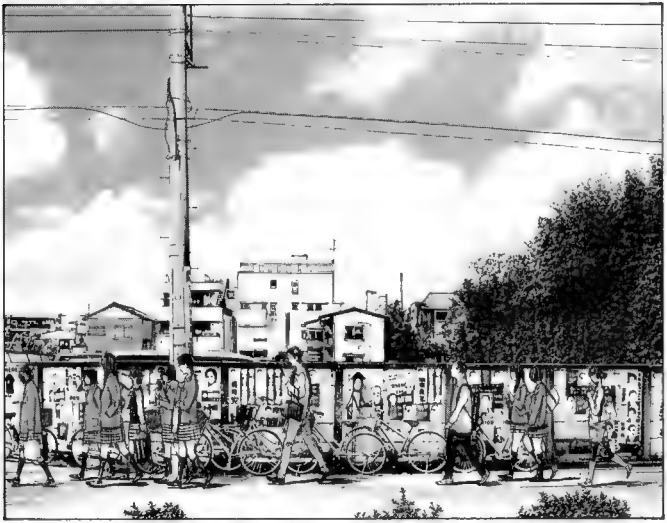
MORNING ALREADY

There's a fine line between cool and empty.

...worthy of telling to other people meant they were already fulfilled.

But maybe, in a sense, just having dreams and worries...

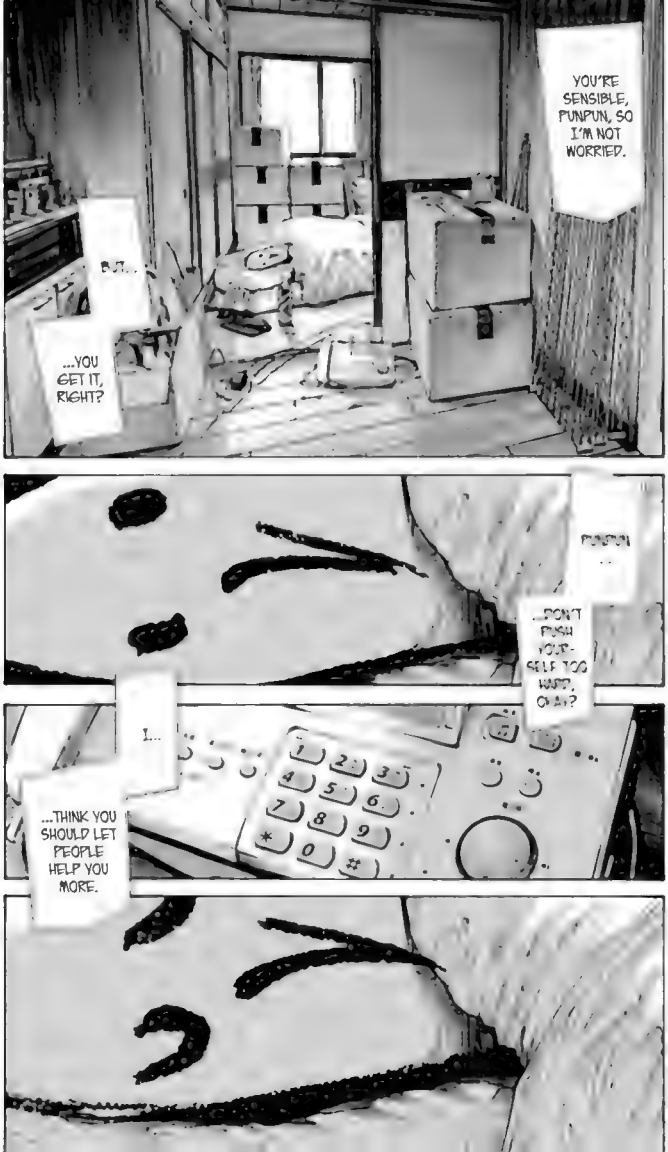
Punpun...



ONE MESSAGE, 12:15 A.M.

...didn't find Aiko that day either.

PLAYING MESSAGE
SORRY TO KEEP CALLING...
...BUT I CAN'T GET AHOLD OF YOU. ARE YOU AT WORK AGAIN?
OH...
...HELLO, IT'S AMIDORI.
THE FURNITURE YOU DIDN'T WANT ARRIVED HERE IN OFUNA YESTERDAY.
THERE'S TOO MUCH OF IT, SO WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GET RID OF YOUR MOM'S DRESSERS AND THINGS...
DO YOU MIND IF YUICHI AND I JUST GET ON WITH IT?
AND...
BUT DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TIME YOU GOT A CELL PHONE?
...I KNOW I KEEP SAYING THIS...
I'LL PAY FOR IT.
CHOCO CHIP


YOU'RE SENSIBLE, PUNPUN, SO I'M NOT WORRIED.
BUT...
...YOU GET IT, RIGHT?
PUNPUN..
...DON'T PUSH YOURSELF TOO HARD, OKAY?
I...
...THINK YOU SHOULD LET PEOPLE HELP YOU MORE.

Punpun
was very
tired again
that day.

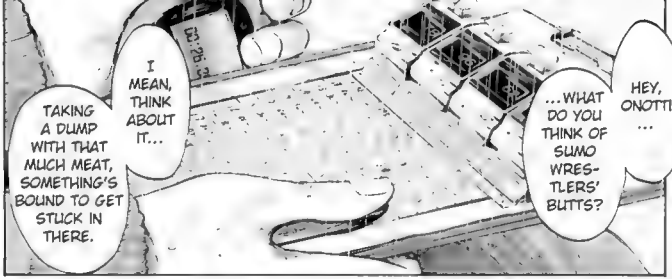
OH GOOD, YOU'RE UP.
ONE OF THE NEIGHBORS CALLED US BECAUSE THEY SAW SOMEONE SLEEPING HERE ALL NIGHT.
...
WHAT DO YOU GUYS DO?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WE'RE POLICE.
ARE YOU DRUNK, BUDDY?
WONDER-FUL...
I APPLAUD YOU!
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
I ENTHUSI-ASTICALLY SUPPORT YOU!

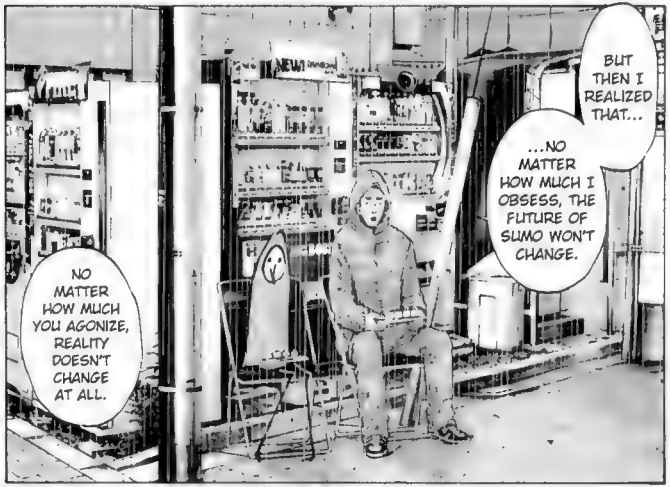
WELL...
I NEED TO RUSH.

TIME TO SHIFT INTO MIRAGE MODE.
FULL STEAM AHEAD!

AGH?
WHY ARE YOU STARING AT ME, ONOTTI?
DID I GET SOME-THING ON MY FACE?
I ALREADY KNOW I'VE GOT MUNG-BEANS ALL OVER IT.

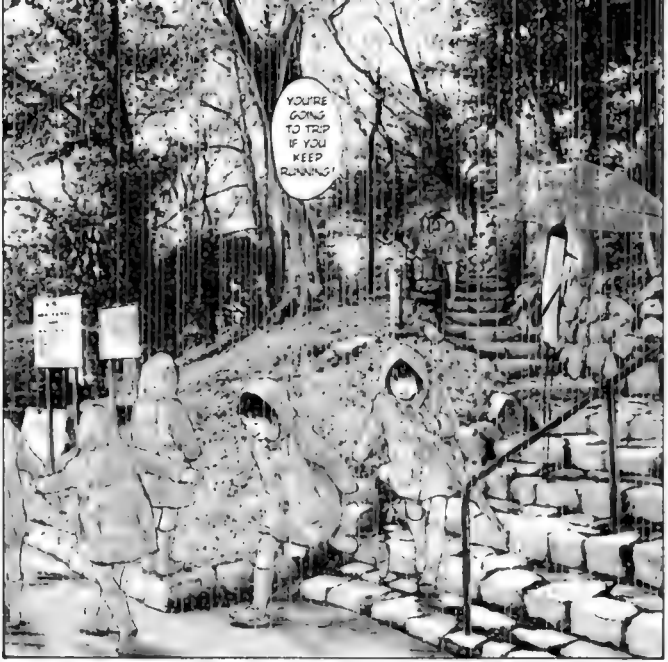
WHAT IS IT? I'M ALWAYS SUPER ENERGETIC.
BOOM, MIMURA MISSILE.
ACTUALLY, SINCE I GOT A GIRLFRIEND RIGHT BEFORE SUMMER STARTED, I DON'T THINK IT'S AN EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT I AM *INVINCIBLE* RIGHT NOW.
IT'S TIME TO GET BACK TO OUR STATIONS, ONOTTI.


HEY, ONOTT! ...
...WHAT DO YOU THINK OF SUMO WRES-TLERS' BUTTS?
I MEAN, THINK ABOUT IT...
TAKING A DUMP WITH THAT MUCH MEAT, SOMETHING'S BOUND TO GET STUCK IN THERE.

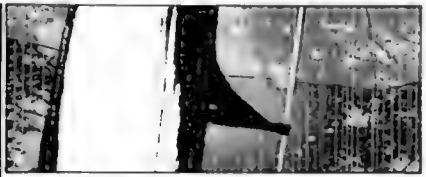

BUT THEN I REALIZED THAT...
...NO MATTER HOW MUCH I OBSESS, THE FUTURE OF SUMO WON'T CHANGE.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU AGONIZE, REALITY DOESN'T CHANGE AT ALL.

IT'S LIKE HOW...
...I'VE ALWAYS WORRIED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF ALL MANKIND.
BUT NO MATTER HOW MUCH I STRESS ABOUT IT, THE WORLD DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER.
AND TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, UNLESS I SOLVE THE VERY BORING PROBLEMS RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME, MY PERSONAL LIVELIHOOD IS IN JEOPARDY.

I'M TELLING YOU UP FRONT— THIS IS NOT BECAUSE MY GIRLFRIEND INFLUENCED ME.
BUT YOU KNOW, ONOTTI ...
BUT TIME IS CRUEL.
...NO MATTER WHAT ANYONE SAYS, I THINK IT WOULD BE OKAY TO STAY A BOY FOREVER.
YOU RESIST, BUT YOU'RE SLOWLY, INEVITABLY PUSHED TOWARDS ADULT-HOOD.
HON KHOTE
NO WAY YOU'D GET MY SENSITIVITY, ONOTTI.
YEAH, THIS ME IS PRETTY COOL TOO.
...EVEN THOUGH IT'S A PAIN.
I'M GOING TO CRAM HARD TO GET THAT TEACHING CERTIFI-CATE...
WELL DONE, SUNSET!
I'VE DECIDED TO HAVE A CRY WHILE TORTURING MY ABS TONIGHT.
PLAYING GAMES WITH THE NIGHT IS HOW KIDS GROW UP. ARE YOU GOING TO FORFEIT?!



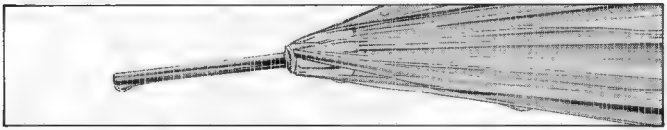
The children ran by, giggling innocently.

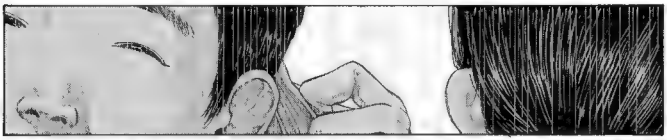


...made Punpun...

...filled with dreams and hopes like weird water balloons...

Thinking about the round heads of these children...

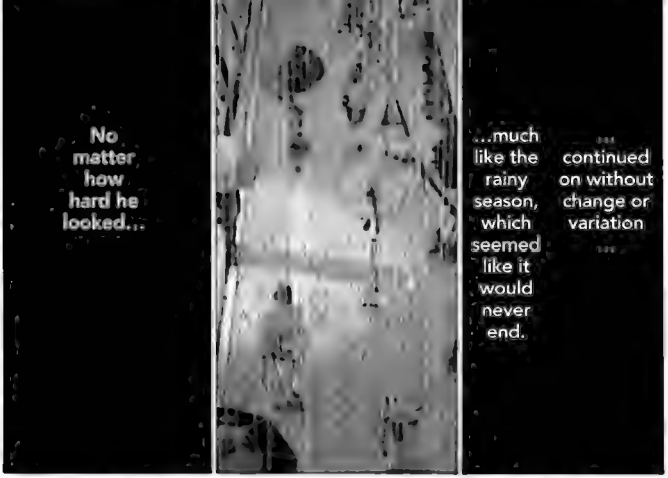


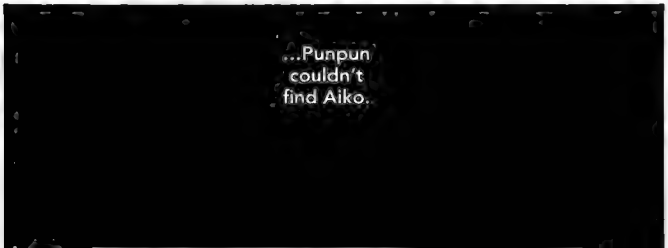


...never mind.

No...

Punpun's
life...


No matter how hard he looked...
...much like the rainy season, which seemed like it would never end.
... continued on without change or variation ...

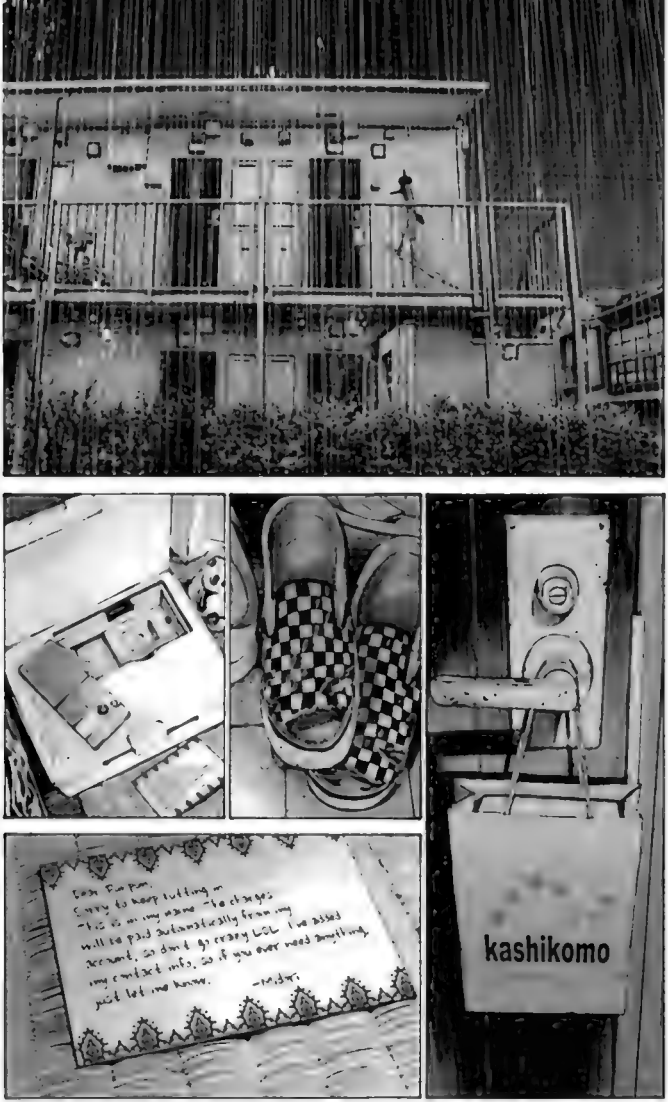

...Punpun couldn't find Aiko.

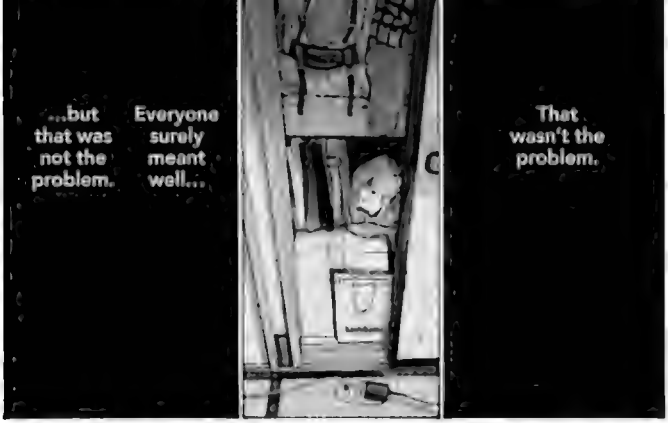
ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP? OHH OH OH!
...YOU HAVE EVEN LESS ENERGY THAN USUAL TODAY.
PUNPUN ...

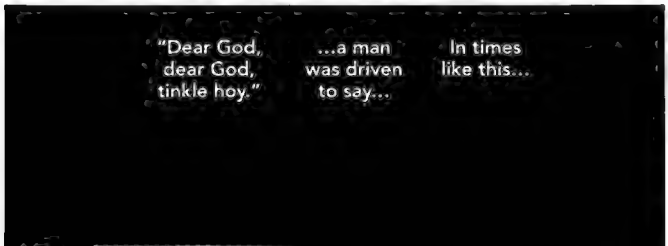
YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY IT. I CAN TELL JUST BY LOOKING AT YOUR GLOOMY FACE.
NO NEED TO BE ANXIOUS! ACTUALLY, I'M ENVIOUS THAT YOU STILL HAVE AN UNKNOWN WORLD TO DISCOVER.
...YOU'RE A VIRGIN, RIGHT?
PUNPUN ...

ANY TRIVIAL PROBLEMS YOUNG GUYS LIKE YOU HAVE WILL MELT AWAY IF YOU HAVE SEX...
CAPICHE? HYA HOO!
SEX IS GOOD.
YOU SHOULD HAVE SEX.

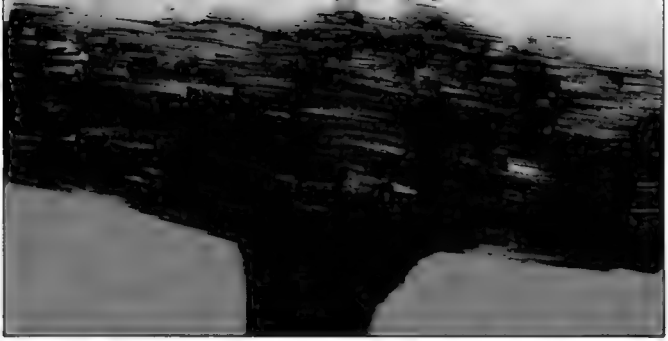
I THINK TEEN GIRLS ARE MANKIND'S GREATEST ASSET.
PUNPUN, YOU'RE ONLY 18, RIGHT?
WELL, I'M NOT PICKY IF THEY'RE IN MIDDLE SCHOOL OR GRADE SCHOOL.
IF YOU EVER GO TO A MIXER, PLEASE, PLEASE INVITE ME...
I'LL TEACH YOU MY SECRET METHOD FOR GUARANTEED SUCCESS.
HUH? YOU DON'T FEEL WELL?
OKAY, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. GO HOME AND REST.
I'LL THINK SOME-THING UP TO TELL THE MAN-AGER.
DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE MIXER. HAAH!
RAMEN

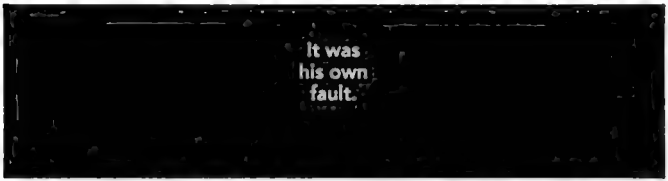

kashikomo

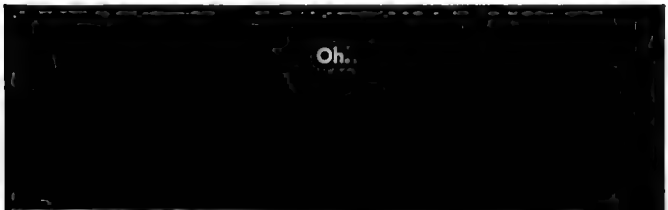

...but that was not the problem.
Everyone surely meant well...
That wasn't the problem.

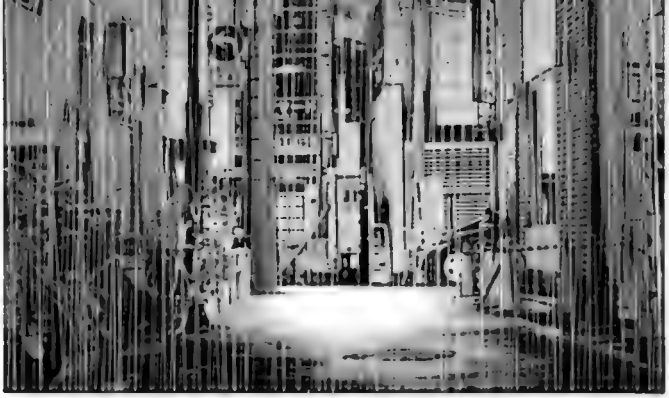

"Dear God, dear God, tinkle hoy."
...a man was driven to say...
In times like this...

BOOO

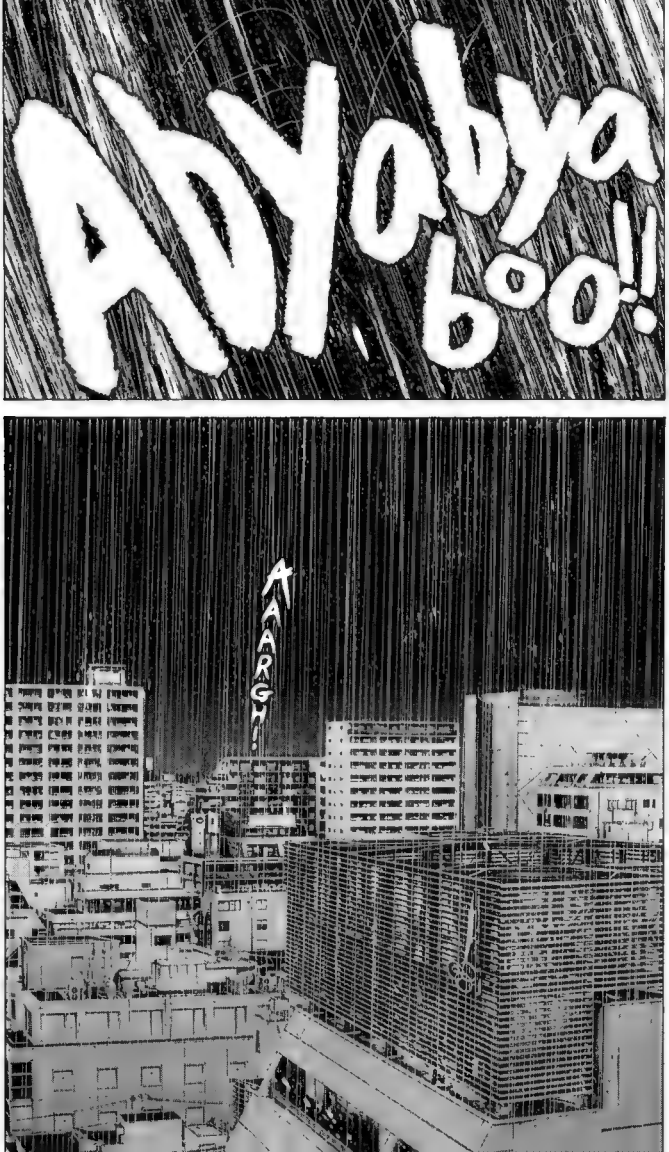


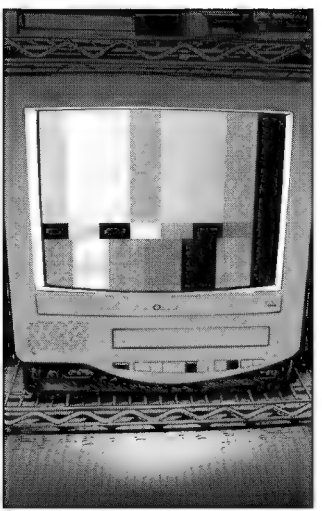

It was
his own
fault.

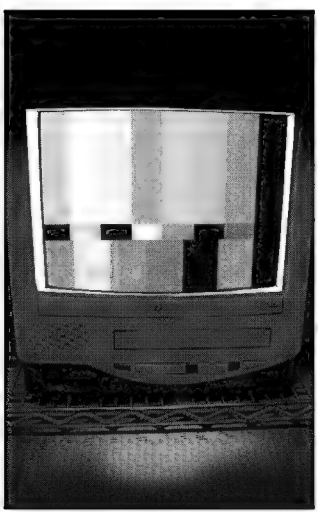

Oh.



SLUSH SLUSH


AAARGH!





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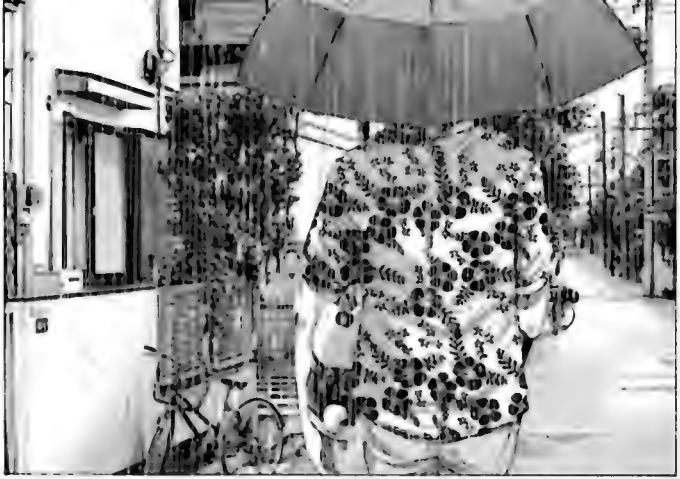
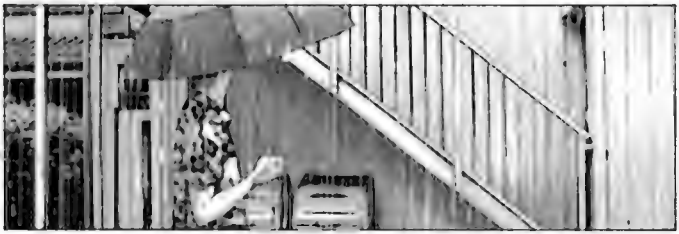




The rain...

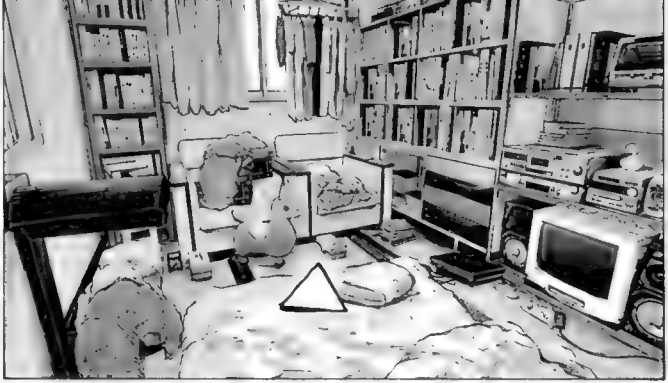
...as if it wanted to keep him confined to the 100-square-foot room.

...the louder the rain got...

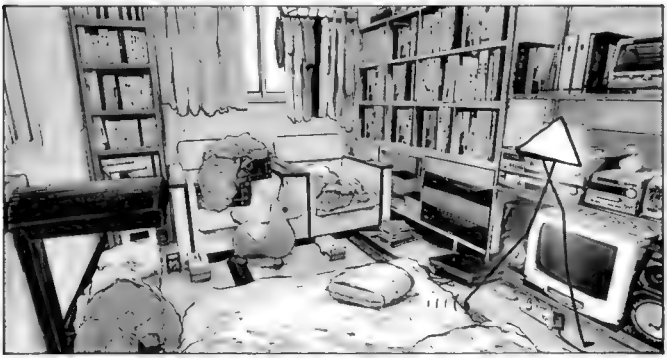
The more Punpun thought about how he had to get up and go outside...

Sigh...

DING DONG



Punpun...



...was
doing
okay.

OH...
HI, THERE. I'M THE LANDLORD, SHISHIDO.
HAVE YOU LOST SOME WEIGHT, PUNPUN?
WELL, I...
...DON'T REALLY HAVE A SPECIFIC REASON FOR STOPPING BY...
HOW DO YOU LIKE LIVING HERE?
DO YOU HAVE SOME TIME?
I WANT TO HAVE A CHAT WITH YOU.
OH, REALLY. IT'S GOOD THAT YOU DON'T HAVE ANY PARTICULAR PROBLEMS.
NO, IT'S JUST THAT MY INNER OLD WOMAN WAS A LITTLE WORRIED.

OH, JUST SHOOTING THE BREEZE, NOTHING SERIOUS...
THE RAINY SEASON IS VERY SLOW FOR THE PROPERTY BUSINESS.
PUNPUN.
I'M THINKING OF HAVING EEL. IS THAT OKAY WITH YOU?

OH ...
YOU'RE VERY HUMBLE FOR A YOUNG MAN.
YOU'RE KEEPING A BORED OLD MAN COMPANY, YOU CAN INDULGE A LITTLE.

SNAP!

DO YOU REMEMBER THE STORY I TOLD YOU WHEN YOU SIGNED YOUR LEASE?
THE OLD MAN WHO USED TO LIVE IN YOUR ROOM GOT SICK AND DIED THERE.
HE BOUGHT INTO A CRAZY CULT, AND THERE WAS A LITTLE INCIDENT...
...BUT HE WAS SERIOUS AND HONEST TO A FAULT.
YOU REMIND ME OF HIM, PUNPUN...
YOU KNOW, AROUND THE EYES, THE WAY YOU ARE.
OBVI-OUSLY, THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT NOW...
...BUT WHEN I THINK ABOUT HOW MAYBE I COULD HAVE SAVED HIM...
IT'S JUST THAT IT'S BEEN STUCK IN THE BACK OF MY MIND.
OH, NO, NO...
I'M SORRY IF I OFFEND-ED YOU.

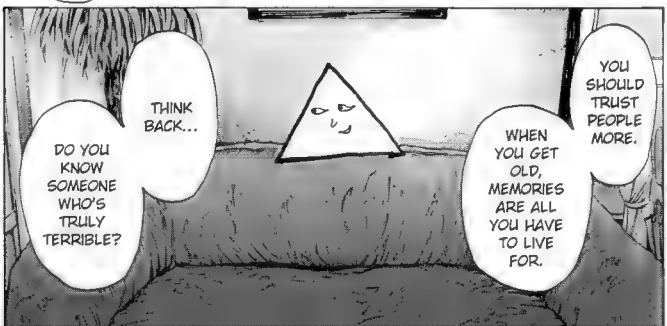
I JUST REMEMBER..
...THE SAD LOOK IN THAT OLD MAN'S EYES.

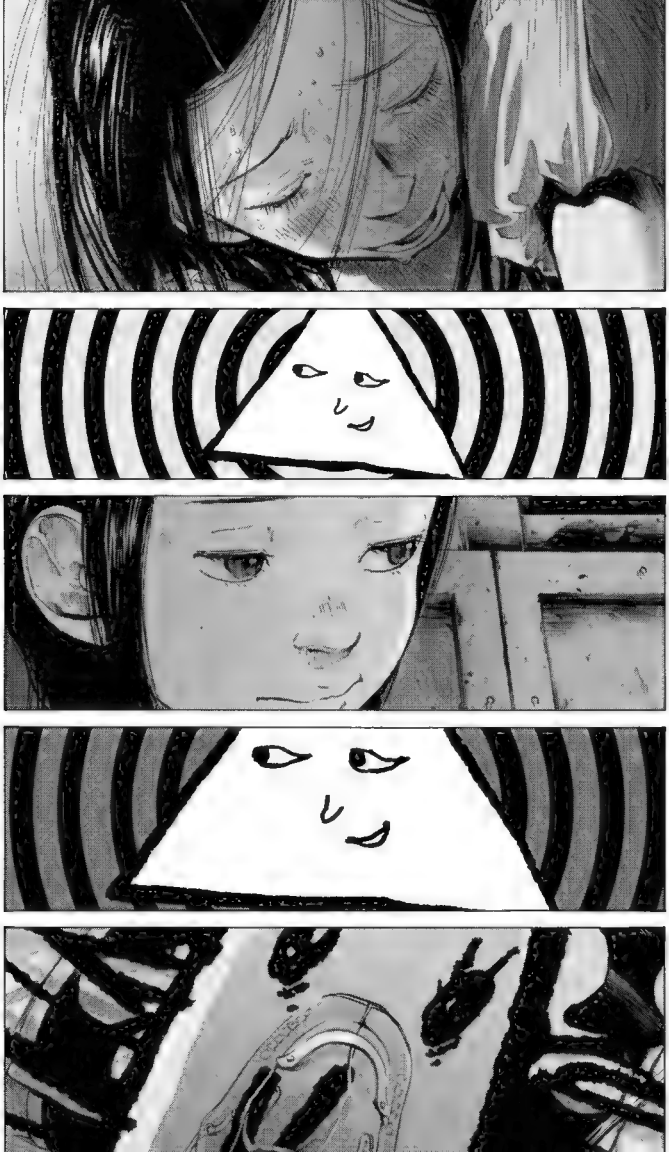
TANABATA FESTIVAL

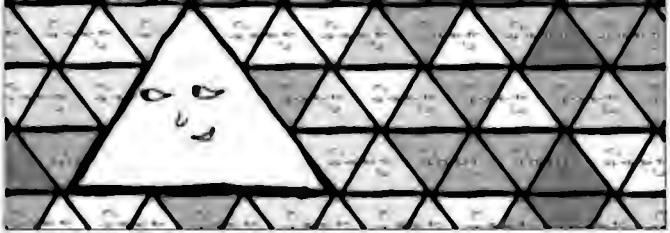
YEAH..
YOUR EYES ARE THE SAME.
EYES THAT SAY YOU HAVE A SURPRISINGLY STRONG WILL.
SOME MIGHT CALL YOU STUBBORN.

BUT YOU NEVER OPEN UP TO OTHERS.
THAT'S WHAT YOUR EYES ARE TELLING ME.

SO WHAT IS IT?
DID SOMEONE BETRAY YOU HORRIBLY ...
...OR DID YOU DO THE BETRAY-ING?
I WON'T ASK FOR DETAILS.


YOU SHOULD TRUST PEOPLE MORE.
WHEN YOU GET OLD, MEMORIES ARE ALL YOU HAVE TO LIVE FOR.
THINK BACK...
DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO'S TRULY TERRIBLE?



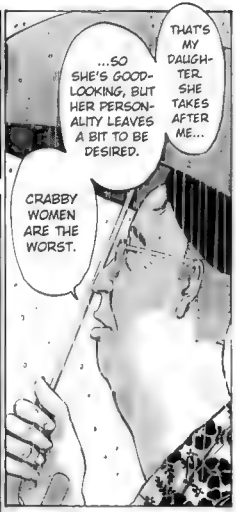


I...
...MAKE IT A POLICY TO GIVE EVERYONE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT UNTIL THEY DO ME WRONG.
BESIDES, BEING SUSPICIOUS OF OTHERS ONLY MAKES THEM HAVE BAD FEELINGS ABOUT ME.
EVEN IF I'M BETRAYED, AS LONG AS I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO'S HURT, IT'S OKAY.

PUNPUN, WITH EYES LIKE THAT ...
TANABATA FESTIVAL
...WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE, NO ONE WILL HELP YOU.
ANYWAY, PUNPUN...
...ARE YOU ONE OF THOSE KIDS WHO'S SHORT ON MONEY?
IF YOU NEED WORK...
HEY...
...THERE YOU GO AGAIN, GIVING WORK TO TOTAL STRANGERS.
THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL AN EASY MARK.
HOW MANY STUPID LOANS HAVE YOU GIVEN OUT?
AND YOU THERE...
YOU'RE YOUNG. STOP WASTING YOUR TIME LISTENING TO AN OLD MAN BLABBER.

OH ...
SCARY, SCARY

SNACK BAR
SOJIMAN


THAT'S MY DAUGHTER. SHE TAKES AFTER ME...
...SO SHE'S GOOD-LOOKING, BUT HER PERSONALITY LEAVES A BIT TO BE DESIRED.
CRABBY WOMEN ARE THE WORST.

COME ON NOW, COME ON.
JUST THINK OF IT AS BROADENING YOUR HORIZONS.

PUNPUN, DO YOU LIKE TO DRINK?
WHAT, YOU'VE NEVER TRIED IT?
LET ME KNOW IF YOU EVER WANT TO.
SHOCHU WITH HOT WATER AND A GINGER ALE, PLEASE.

LISTEN ...
...HE HAD SNACK BARS AND NIGHT CLUBS CONFUSED.
HA HA!
DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S KIND OF CUTE?

GEEZ...
I'M SOAKED!
HEY, THROW ME A TOWEL, PLEASE!
NO, IT'S NOT. BUT I'M DRINKING ANYWAY.
BUT IT'S BEEN HARD TO GET HERE SINCE I HEARD YOU QUIT.
HEY, SACHI.
OH, MR. SHISHIDO, IT'S BEEN A WHILE. IS YOUR LIVER BETTER?
OH, COME ON...
I STOP BY ON THE WAY HOME FROM WORK PRETTY OFTEN.

JUST LISTENING TO OLD MEN'S DIRTY STORIES MEANS I CAN DRINK FOR FREE.
OH DEAR, DID YOU FIND A JOB?

TEACHER IN A CRAM SCHOOL. I CAN'T PRETEND TO BE HEART-BROKEN AND HANG AROUND FOREVER, YOU KNOW
CAN I HAVE A GLASS OF WATER?
YEAH, YEAH.

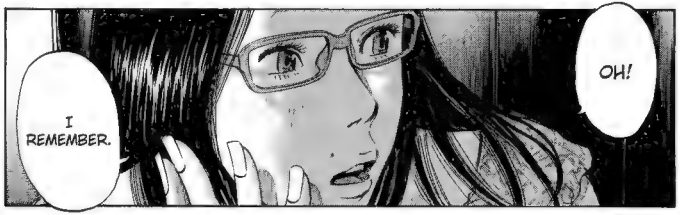
UH... THE YOUNG GUY NEXT TO YOU. IS HE WITH YOU?
YEAH, THAT'S PUNPUN ONODERA, ONE OF OUR TENANTS.

I'M SACHI NANJO.
NICE TO MEET YOU.

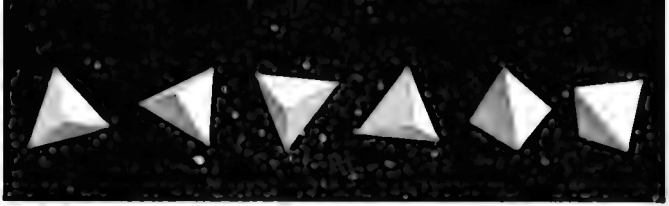
AHHH?
AHHHHH?

YOU...
HAVE WE MET SOME-WHERE?

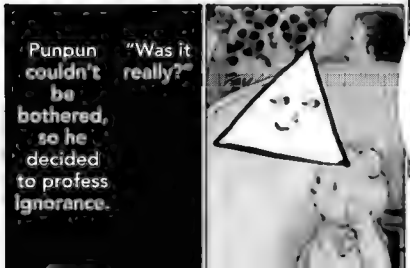
WE'VE DEFINITELY MET SOMEWHERE!
MMM...
...YOU.


I REMEMBER.
OH!

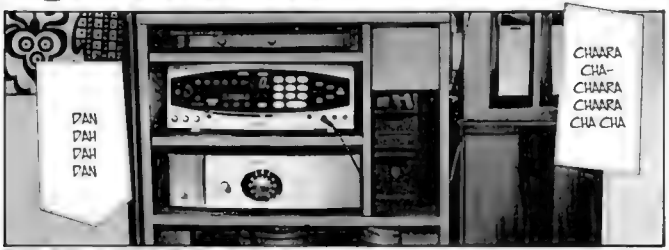
YOU CAME WITH AZUSA TO SEE THAT ART EXHIBITION?!
I WAS 19, SO THREE YEARS AGO?
WHEN WAS IT?



YOU KNOW, AZUSA KANE.
IT WAS RAINING THEN TOO. JUST LIKE TODAY.

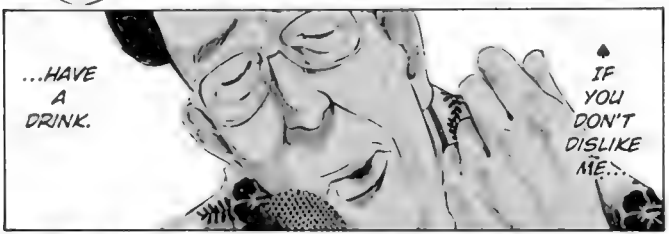

Punpun couldn't be bothered, so he decided to profess ignorance.
"Was it really?"

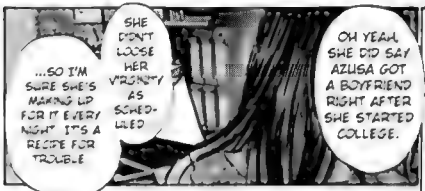
AH, ONCE AGAIN I'VE BECOME DRUNK, CHARMED BY OUR PROPRIETRESS'S BEAUTY.
DEAR ME.
THE FIRST NIGHT WE MET WAS SOGGY LIKE THIS ONE.
YOUR HAIR WAS STICKING UP AND YOU WERE WEARING A DESIGNER T-SHIRT...
I THOUGHT, "THIS KID IS GOING FOR IT."
THAT'S RIGHT, YEAH. I REMEMBER NOW.


DAN DAH DAH DAN
CHAARA CHA-CHAARA CHAARA CHA CHA

I, HEIROKU SHISHIDO, ALTHOUGH INCOMPETENT, WILL ATTEMPT A SONG.
PLEASE LISTEN TO MY RENDITION OF "IZAKAYA."
GO, HEIRO!

AZUSA?
I'M SURE SHE'S FINE. I HAVEN'T SEEN HER RECENTLY, BUT SHE MOVED OUT ON HER OWN WHEN SHE STARTED COLLEGE.
KANIE GOT HERSELF GAINFULLY EMPLOYED BEFORE ME, SO I DON'T HAVE MUCH OPPORTUNITY TO FIND OUT WHAT'S UP...
OH, BY KANIE I MEAN THE FAT ONE WITH THE GLASSES, AZUSA'S SISTER.


♠ IF YOU DON'T DISLIKE ME...
...HAVE A DRINK.


OH YEAH, SHE DID SAY AZUSA GOT A BOYFRIEND RIGHT AFTER SHE STARTED COLLEGE.
SHE DIDN'T LOOSE HER VIRGINITY AS SCHEDULED
...SO I'M SURE SHE'S MAKING UP FOR IT EVERY NIGHT. IT'S A RECIPE FOR TROUBLE

♥ OKAY THEN, I WILL HAVE...
...A DOUBLE BOURBON.

♠ I'M NOT DUMB ENOUGH TO ASK YOUR NAME...
...LET ALONE YOUR LIFE STORY.

...SIT NEXT TO EACH OTHER IN AN IZAKAYA.
♥ THAT'S RIGHT, WE JUST HAPPENED TO...
I HEARD THINGS DIDN'T WORK OUT FOR YOU GUYS THAT NIGHT.
IT WAS SO OBVIOUS YOU WERE BOTH VIRGINS.
THE TWO OF YOU WERE SO FIDGETY. IT WAS ANNOYING.
MALE VIRGINS ARE SO SELF-ABSORBED AND IRRITATING.
THEY'RE SO SURE THEY KNOW EVERYTHING.
THERE'S NO WAY A GUY WHO JUST SPOUTS HIS OWN OPINIONS AND DOESN'T LISTEN TO ANYONE CAN GET A GIRL.
♥♠ NO ART, NO FLOWERS, NO SONGS, NO FANCY WORDS...
...OR STYLE IN THIS IZAKAYA.

HOW BADLY DID YOU SCREW UP THAT YOU COULDN'T GET LAID UNDER THOSE CONDITIONS?
I THINK SHE WAS PRETTY INTO YOU.
HAVING SAID THAT, AZUSA WAS PRETTY BUMMED AFTERWARD.
♥ OKAY, STAY UNTIL IT STOPS, I'LL JUST DRINK ALONE.
♠ IF WE GO OUTSIDE, IT WILL BE RAINING. IT WAS SPRINKLING BEFORE...
...GO ON HOME.
♥ DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME...
♠ THEN I'M HERE TILL THE MORNING.
I'VE MET AN UNFORTUNATE WOMAN.

NO ART, NO FLOWERS, NO SONGS, NO FANCY WORDS...
OH ...
... SORRY.
ARE YOU NOT OVER AZUSA YET?
"I'm not still pining for her. But your rudeness is off-putting."

...OR STYLE IN THIS IZAKAYA.

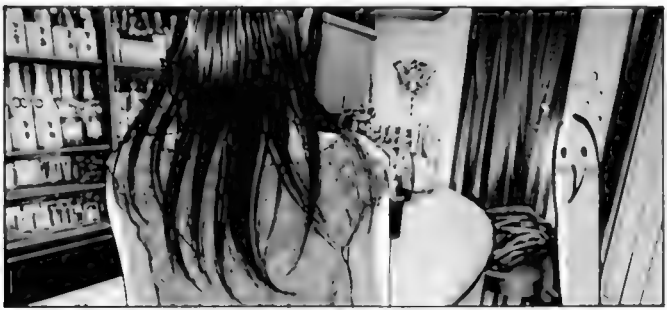
"Excuse me, I'm leaving."

WHOA ...
WHOA!
HANG ON A MINUTE.
I'M SORRY, I DON'T MEAN ANYTHING BY IT...
I HAVE A SHARP TONGUE. IT'S A REALLY BAD HABIT.
NEVER MIND THAT. THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE WANTED TO TELL YOU IF I EVER SAW YOU AGAIN.
THAT GUEST BOOK...
...DO YOU REMEMBER?
I ASKED YOU TO WRITE SOMETHING RANDOM, AND YOU FILLED THE BOOK PATHOLOGICALLY.
I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD GET THE CHANCE TO MEET YOU AGAIN.
ANYWAY, THANK YOU.
ACTUALLY...
...WHEN I READ IT, IT WAS MORE LIKE A DELUSIONAL NARRATIVE THAN A REVIEW, BUT...

IT'S...
...SET IN OUTER SPACE, BUT IT'S YOUR STORY, RIGHT?
OF COURSE, IT STILL NEEDS A LOT OF REVISION...
...BUT I THOUGHT IT WAS REALLY INTERESTING.

I GOT A LOT OF INSPIRATION FROM IT.
I ENTER BOOK ILLUSTRATION COMPETITIONS ...

ARE YOU AT ALL...
...INTERESTED IN WRITING IT OUT PROPERLY, AS A REAL STORY?
I BELIEVE IN YOUR TALENT, PUNPUN.



HUH? A DRINK?
THIS IS MR. SHISHIDO'S, BUT WHY DON'T YOU HAVE IT?
GGGG
GGGG
GGGG
GGGG
WHOA, LOOK AT YOU, PUTTING IT AWAY.

OH MY.
"You shouldn't get caught up with me."
WAIT, WHAT?
CAN'T YOU HOLD YOUR LIQUOR?
OH GEEZ. WHAT A PAIN IN THE ASS.
WATER!

"No, no, not to worry, I'm not drunk at all... By the way, Nanjo, is it okay if I tug your nipple?"

"Can you please not tell him that when he found a girlfriend, I truly hoped she was ugly?"

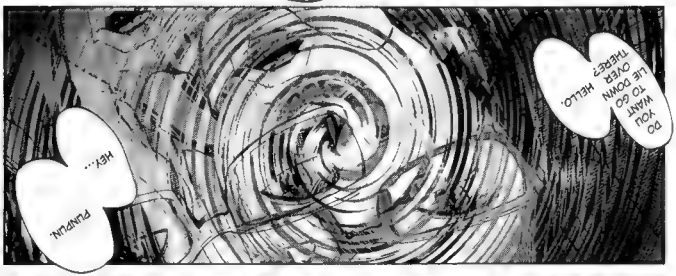
"I don't dislike Mimura...

"...and I'm not a virgin, so can you not make fun of me, please?"

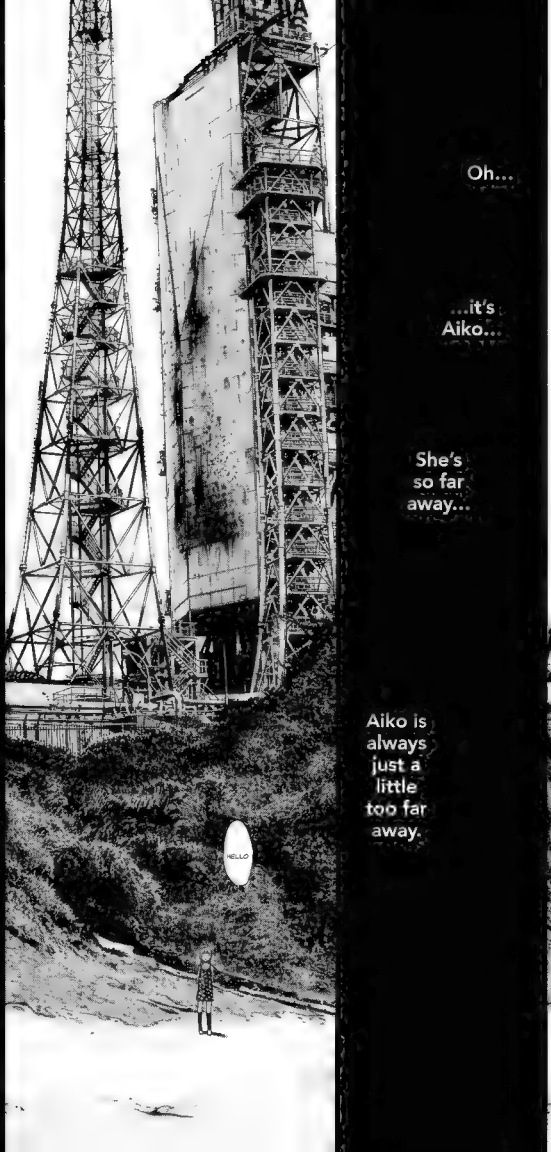
"I'll just get cocky if you compliment me...

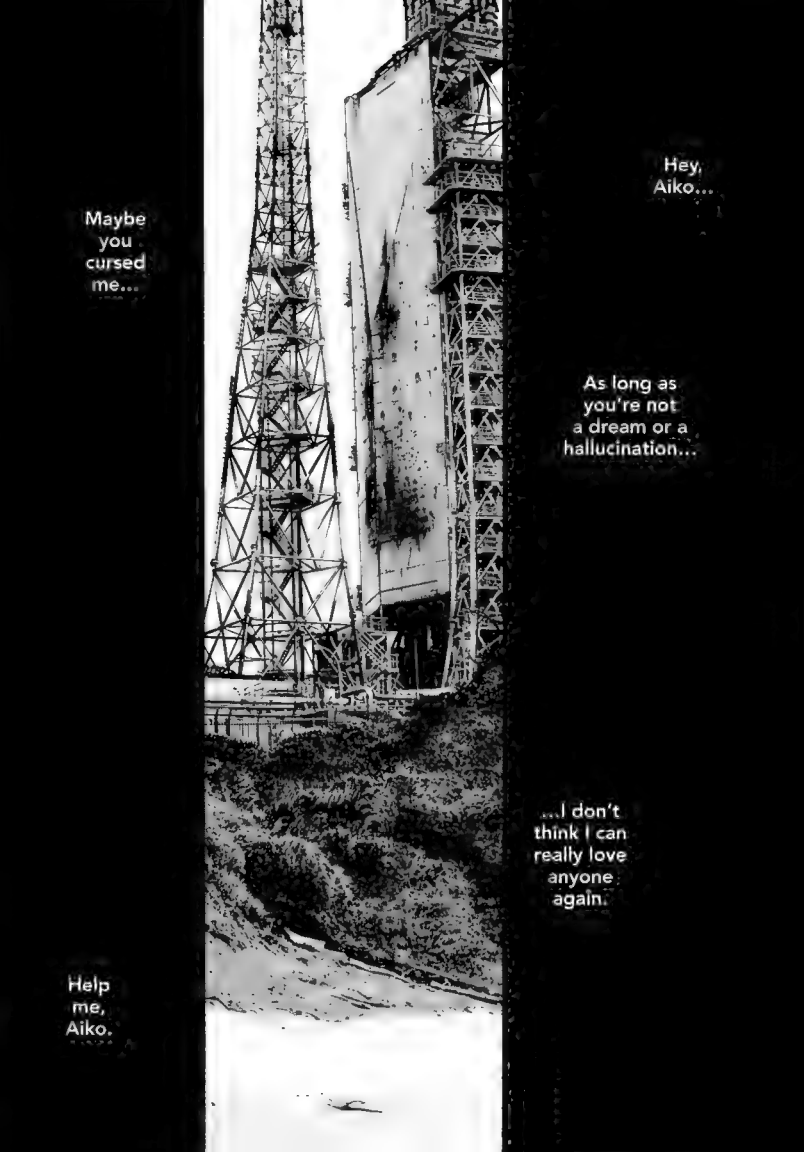
"That story was just luck...

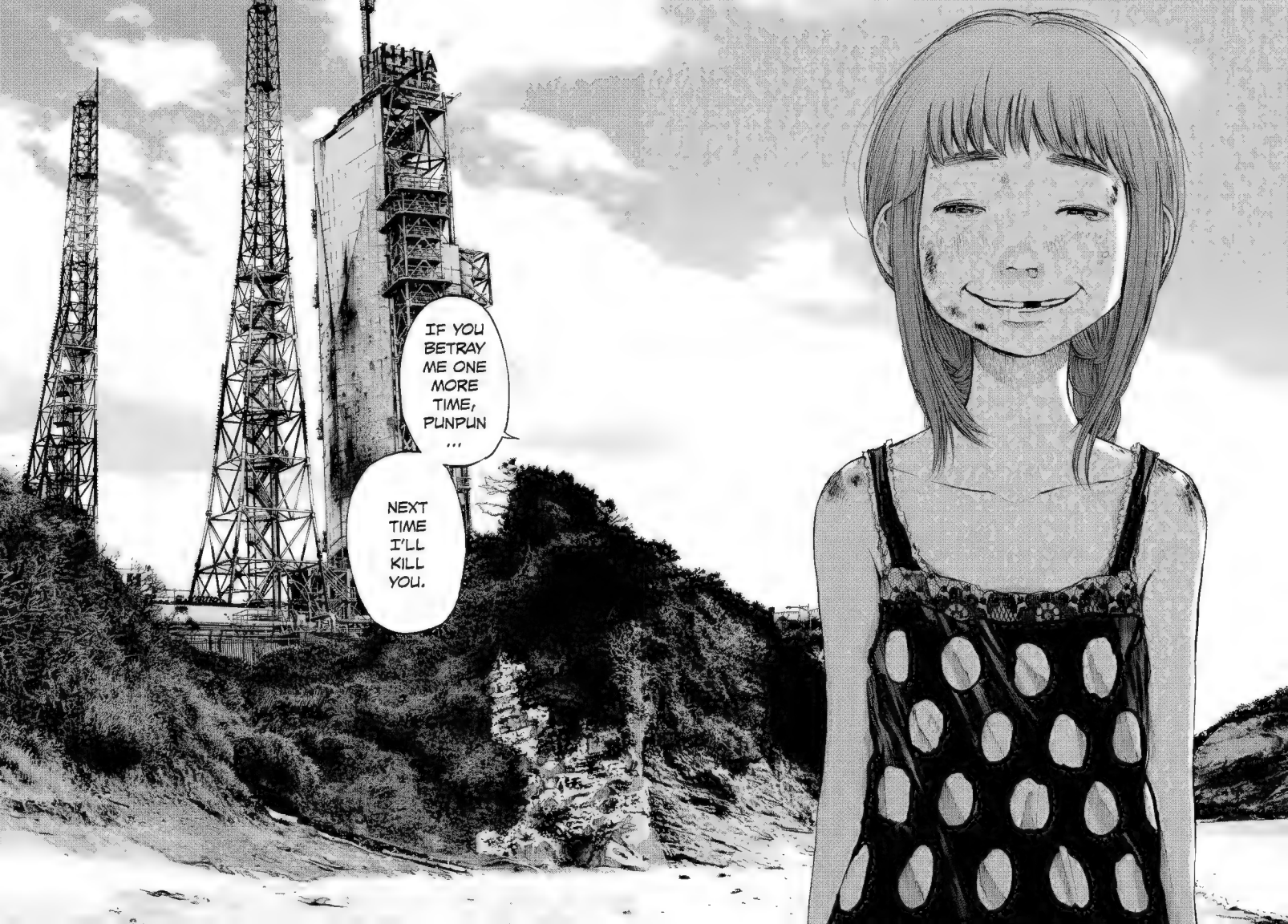
I don't know what to do. But I have to do something.
I search and I search, and I can't find what I'm looking for.
Actually I'm a demon sent from Geldark, the god of hell. Oh, that's a lie.
So I told you it's dangerous to be around me...
MIMURA?
PUNPUN, WHO'S MIMURA?
HEY, MR. SHISHIDO, DO YOU KNOW WHERE THIS KID LIVES?
ACTUALLY, I'M PRETTY WASTED TOO.

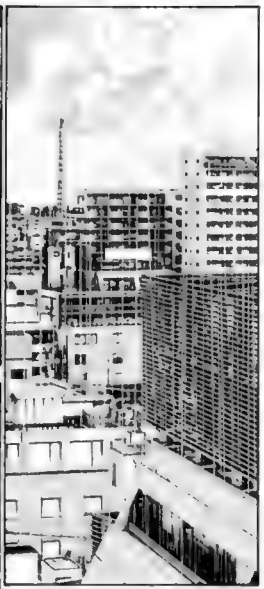

PUNPUN.
HEY...
DO YOU WANT TO GO LIE DOWN OVER THERE? HELLO.

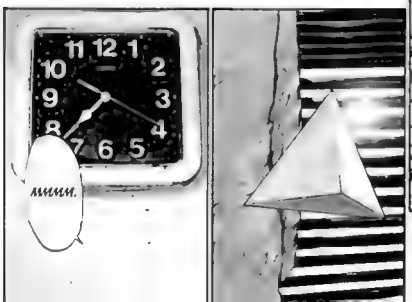
That's terrible, isn't it? Hee hee.
...it's oddly comforting...
Lately, when I pretend to be mentally ill...
HELLO.


Oh...
...it's Aiko...
She's so far away...
Aiko is always just a little too far away.
HELLO


Hey, Aiko...
Maybe you cursed me...
As long as you're not a dream or a hallucination...
...I don't think I can really love anyone again.
Help me, Aiko.


IF YOU BETRAY ME ONE MORE TIME, PUNPUN ...
NEXT TIME I'LL KILL YOU.

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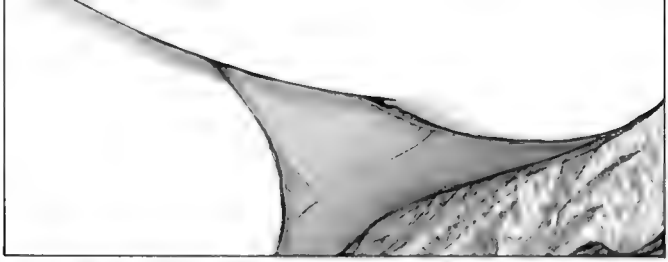
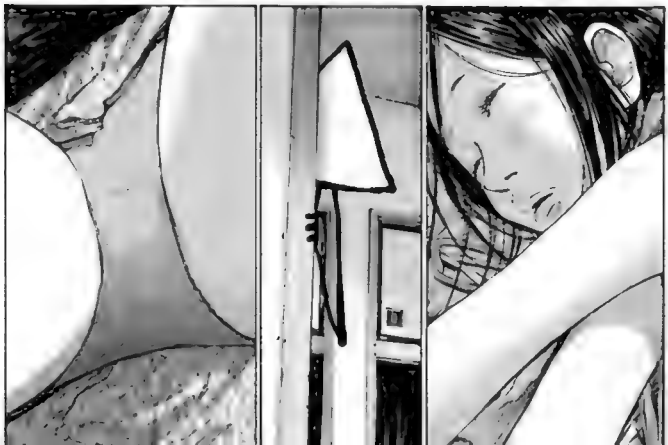
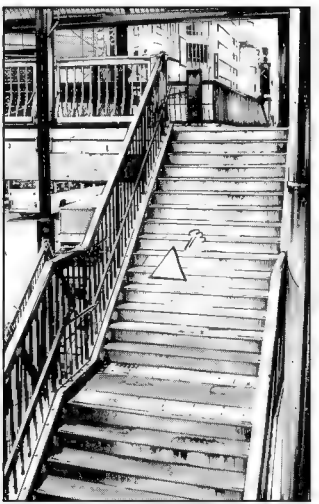
10 2
9 3
8 4
7 6 5
мммм.





Huh?

Huh?



GOODNIGHT PUNPUN INIO ASANO
Part Seven

BACKGROUND ASSISTANTS Yuki Toribuchi
Satsuki Sato
CG ASSISTANT: Hisashi Saito
COOPERATION: Kumatsuto
Yu Uehara

GOODNIGHT PUNPUN
Part Eight

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STORY THUS FAR...

Having mistaken ulterior motive for motivation, Punpun moves out on his own. He later meets up again with the dark-haired artist with the center part. She then comes on to him big-time. Punpun is in a tizzy.

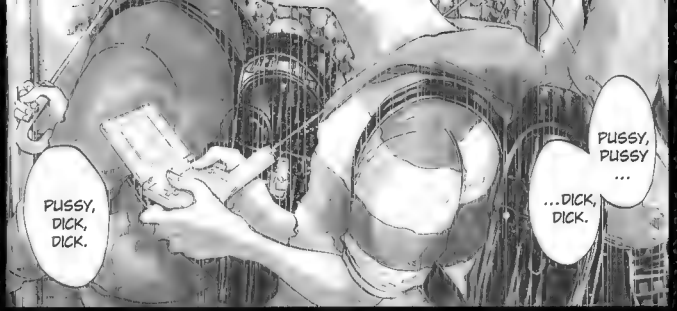
CAST OF CHARACTERS

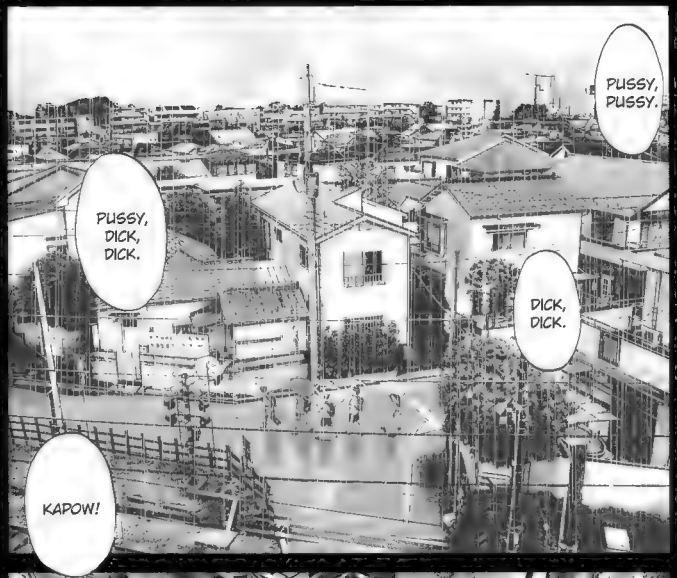
PUNPUN ONODERA
An 18-year-old part-timer. He is [illegible].

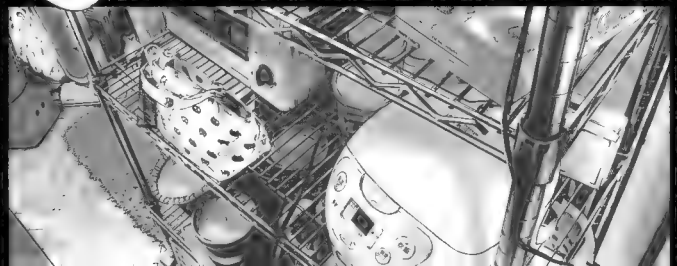
SACHI NANJO
A 22-year-old cram school teacher. Her glasses are the core of her being, so she dies if they come off.

YUKINOSHIN MIMURA
An 18-year-old college student.
"The moon will be dyed red again tonight..."

Chapter 79


PUSSY, DICK, DICK.
PUSSY, PUSSY ...
...DICK, DICK.


PUSSY, PUSSY.
PUSSY, DICK, DICK.
DICK, DICK.
KAPOW!



PUSSY, PUSSY ...
...DICK, DICK.
PUSSY, DICK, DICK.

Oh.

Hair.

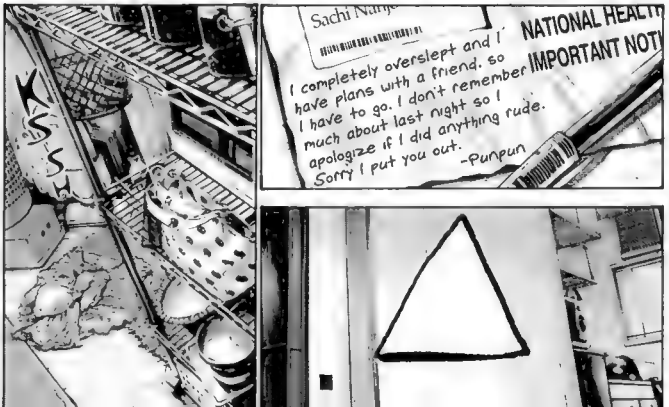
MMM ...
ARMM
AARGH ...
IT'S HOT.
AHHH

PUNPUN.
YOU UP?
I'M HUNG-OVER, SO I'M GOING TO GO TAKE A SHOWER ...
...BUT THEN I'LL MAKE BREAKFAST. DO YOU WANT TO STAY?
HOW CAN HE CRASH THAT HARD IN SOMEONE ELSE'S BED?
HE'S A REST-LESS SLEEPER, THIS ONE.

UGH.

OWW.

SKRICH
SKRICH


Sachi Nanj
NATIONAL HEALTH
IMPORTANT NOTI
I completely overslept and I have plans with a friend. so I have to go. I don't remember much about last night so I apologize if I did anything rude. Sorry I put you out.
-Punpun
KSSH

MILKY WAY
SACHI NANJO

...Punpun told another stupid lie.

And just like that...

They should die, no excuses.

Liars are bad.

Why did Punpun have so much trouble relating to other people?

DENTIST

Time to show us your sense of justice.

Hey, hot stuff!

MAGIC. ☆

HUH?

GIRLS LOVE IT.

Why is everyone looking so relaxed and leaving me alone? Idiots.

People like me should just hurry up and get killed.

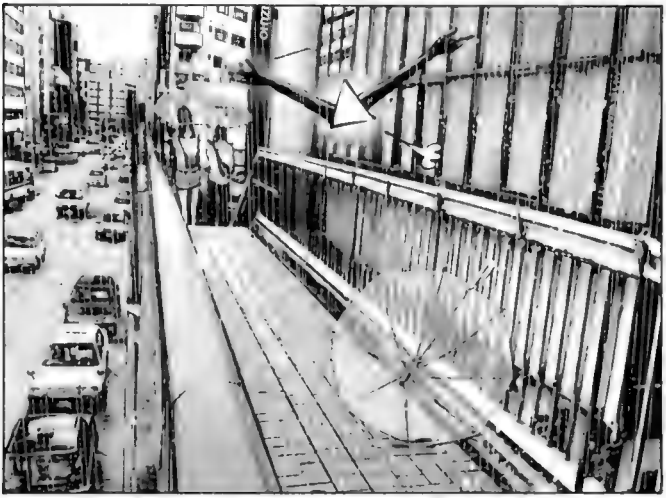
No, stop that now.

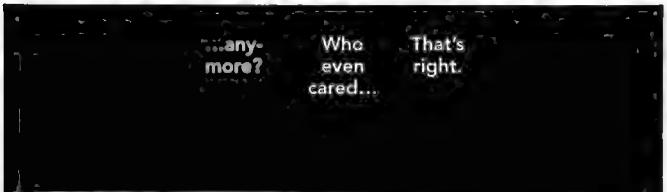
...would Punpun have to keep obsessing over the same thing, over and over, before he was satisfied?

How many times...

The last few months...

He was a natural-born idiot, after all.



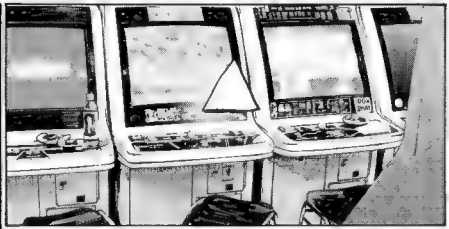

That's right.
Who even cared....
...any-more?

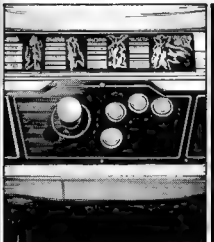
...he would find Aiko today.

It's not like...

...he should just peel off her clothes and shove his meat in, no matter who she was.

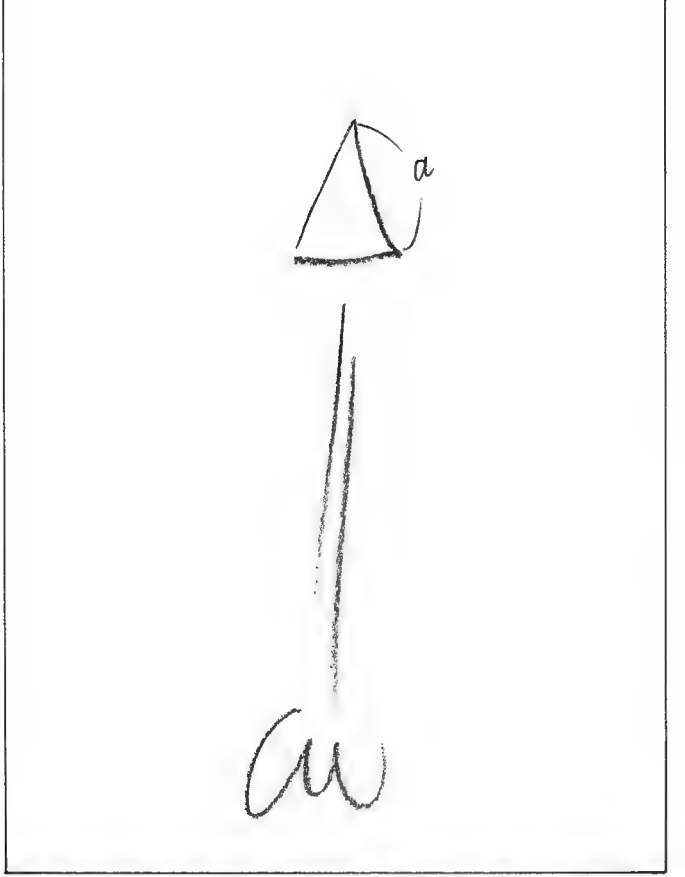
If he got another opportunity with Miss Sass Pants...



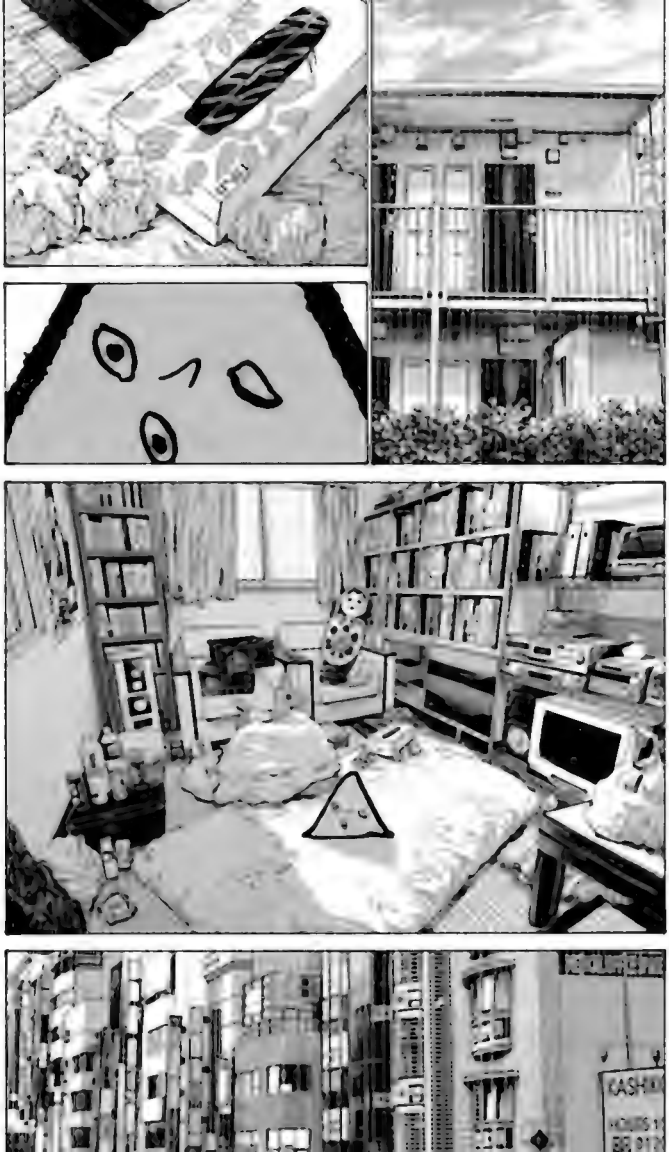


It didn't matter anymore.

"I wonder if they would execute me?!"
"I wonder if the police would arrest me?



Pyun!



Chapter 80

$2.00
LOCKERS
PHOTOS

His sighs were sucked into the town's irritation and resignation.

The unpleasant humidity entwined itself around Punpun's body like a fog.

...the rain slithered down.

Once again...

...he would be unable to remember what he was trying to do.

But there was a danger that by wandering the streets like a zombie day after day...

OH.

...that he could think about anything anymore.

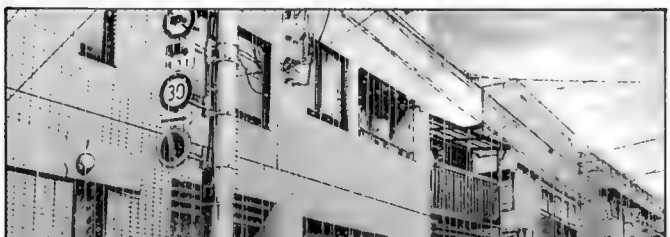
Punpun wasn't sure...

PUNPUN!
HEY!

HELLO, HEY, HEY...
...YOU THERE!
"Oh, hello."
DON'T IGNORE ME, PUNPUN.
YEAH, YOU!
FITNESS CENTER

IT'S POURING AGAIN...
I'M ON MY WAY HOME FROM WORK.
PUNPUN, DO YOU HAVE PLANS?

GREAT!
YOU'RE VERY FLEXIBLE.
MY STUFF GETS STOLEN ALL THE TIME, INCLUDING UMBRELLAS.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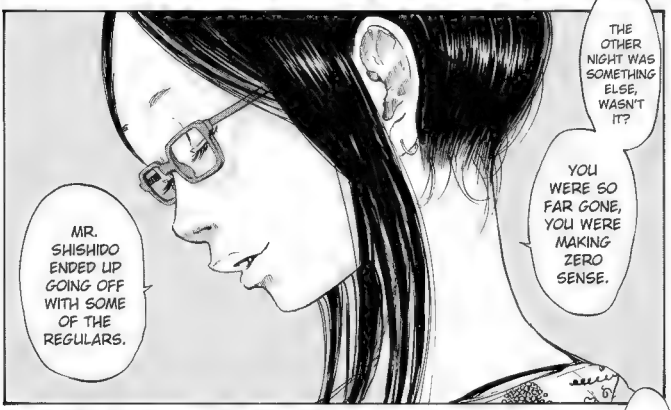
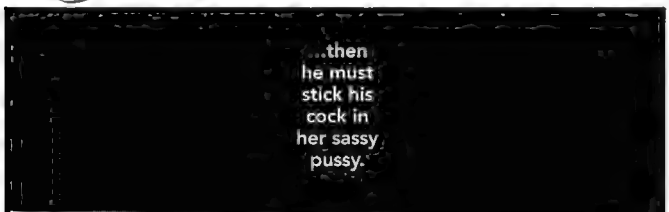
SIZZ
SIZZ
SIZZ


THE OTHER NIGHT WAS SOMETHING ELSE, WASN'T IT?
YOU WERE SO FAR GONE, YOU WERE MAKING ZERO SENSE.
MR. SHISHIDO ENDED UP GOING OFF WITH SOME OF THE REGULARS.

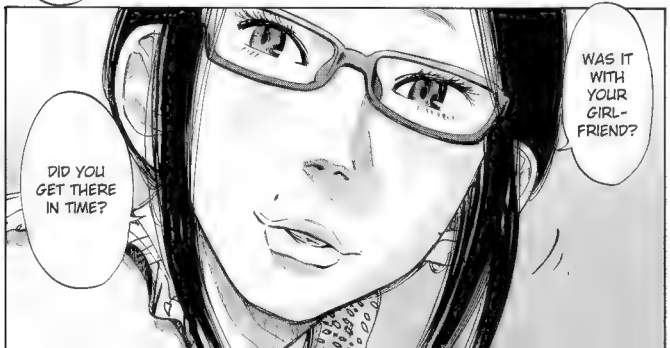
Punpun remembered now.
...that's right...
Oh...
OH...
...AND SINCE YOU SEEMED WORRIED ABOUT IT...
...THERE WERE NO DRUNKEN SHENANIGANS, SO DON'T STRESS.
OH, SORRY. DO YOU WANT A DRINK?

If his destiny was to return to this room...
YOU SHOULD PROBABLY LAY OFF THE BOOZE.
HOW ABOUT SOME OOLONG TEA?
I JUST BOUGHT A BUNCH YESTERDAY.

HUH?
I COULD HAVE SWORN IT WAS AROUND HERE SOME-WHERE...


...then he must stick his cock in her sassy pussy.

BY THE WAY...
...SORRY YOU WERE LATE FOR YOUR THING.
IF I'D KNOWN YOU HAD PLANS, I WOULD HAVE WOKEN YOU UP.
OH, HERE IT IS.


WAS IT WITH YOUR GIRL-FRIEND?
DID YOU GET THERE IN TIME?

HUH?
WHAT?
WHAT'S UP?

"Do you need any help? *Snigger.*"
OH, NO, NO...
IT'S A ONE-PERSON JOB.
MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME. YOU'VE GOT THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT, RIGHT?

HERE ...
...DIG IN!
YOU'RE BROKE, RIGHT?
YOU LOOK PALE. YOU SHOULD EAT BETTER.

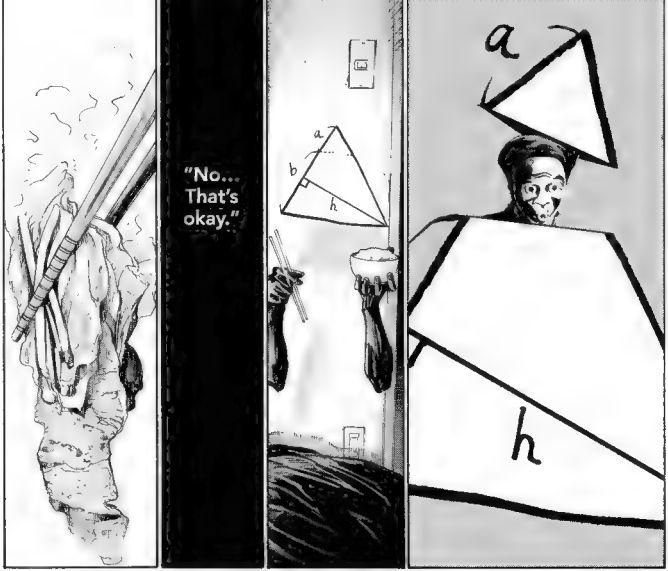
LET ME KNOW IF IT'S TOO BLAND.
IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU DON'T LIKE, JUST SHOVE IT ASIDE.
I HAVE NATTO AND KIMCHI, SO HELP YOURSELF.
UGH, THEY'RE IRRITATING.
MODEL-TURNED-CELEBRITY IS TOO GREEDY, DON'T YOU THINK?
OSHAMANBE, HOKKAIDO!
CORRECT.

"Is it because you have confidence in yourself that you can be kind to other people?"
"You're surprisingly kind, Nanjo."
OH, YOU CAN CHANGE THE CHANNEL.
MUST BE NICE TO BE SO BLESSED.
HMM?
YOU THINK?
THIS IS JUST NORMAL.
I'VE GOT THE USUAL AMOUNT OF SELF-INTEREST IN BEING LIKED, JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE.
WOW, THAT'S A TWISTED WAY TO THINK.
AND "SURPRISINGLY"? THAT'S UNCALLED-FOR.
Punpun wished he hadn't said anything at all.
"I'm not very good at talking to people."
"I'm sorry..."

HMMM ...
SO YOU DON'T HAVE ANY SELF-CONFIDENCE?
THEN MAKE SOME.
OR GO TO THE STORE AND BUY SOME.

YOU KNOW ...
...I'VE NOTICED THAT YOU STRESS OUT ABOUT EVERYTHING.
THAT MUST GET REALLY EXHAUSTING.
JUST TALK NATURALLY. SAY WHAT YOU THINK.

THAT'S OKAY. I'M THICK-SKINNED.
JUST BE YOURSELF.
"I'm scared that...that natural will hurt the person I'm speaking to."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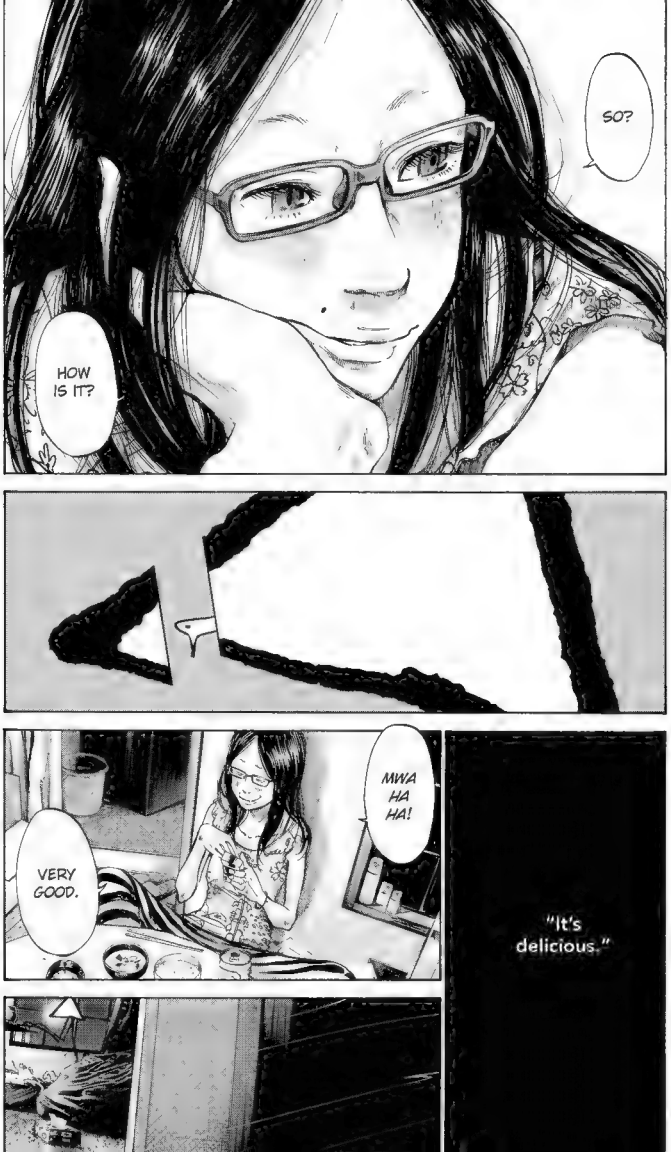
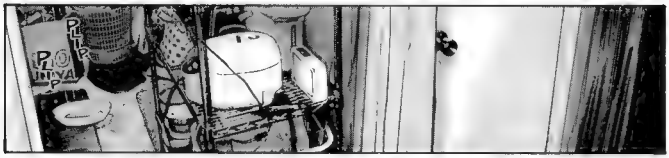
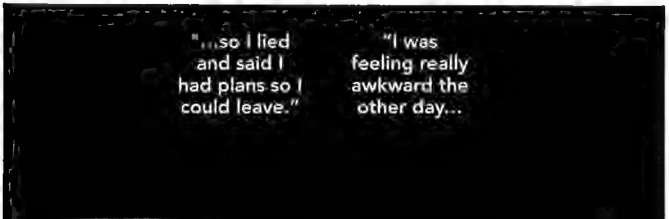
a
b
h
"No... That's okay."

MUNCH
MUNCH
h


SO?
HOW IS IT?
MWA HA HA!
VERY GOOD.
"It's delicious."

"Not only do I not have a girlfriend, I don't even have friends.
HMM?
"I..."


PIZZA
PIZZA

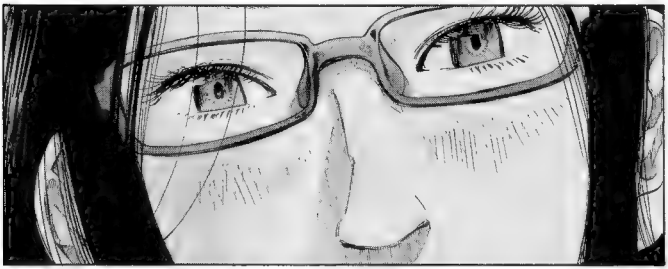

"I was feeling really awkward the other day...
"...so I lied and said I had plans so I could leave."

"While you were passed out, I stared at your bare legs and your thighs. To be exact, I was mostly looking at your crotch.

"...so that's why I ran away.

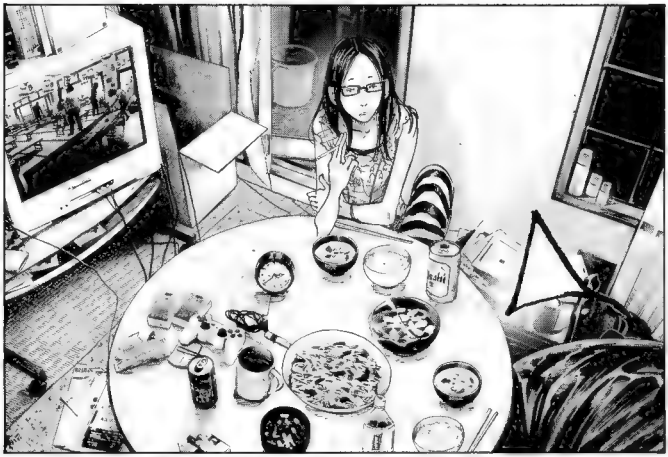
"...and was like, **whoa**, and then I was like, **yikes**...

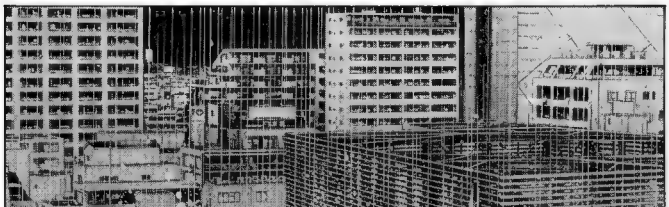
"I saw your pubic hair popping out...



"As long as I'm being honest...

"...Jerked off for the first time in three years last night."





"Actually...

"...to be more accurate, between the hours of last night and this morning...

"...I was masturbating continuously.

"I've prohibited myself from masturbating since high school for personal reasons...

"...so it was incredibly powerful."

SNORT!
HA HA HA...
...YOU IDIOT!
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO TELL ME ALL THAT.
SERI-OUSLY ...
...I WAS FLASH-ING MY PANT-IES?
SO SORRY.
YOU WANT ME TO SHOW YOU AGAIN?
IT'S NO SKIN OFF MY BACK.

I'M JUST KIDDING.
SMACK
HMM, I'M ASTOUNDED YOU HELD OFF FOR THREE YEARS.
I WON'T ASK WHAT THE PERSONAL REASONS WERE.
YO, PRINCE WET DREAM!
YOU DO HAVE A WHIFF OF THE FAIRYTALE ABOUT YOU, BUT I HAD NO IDEA IT WAS SO TWISTED.
YOU'RE VERY INTEREST-ING.

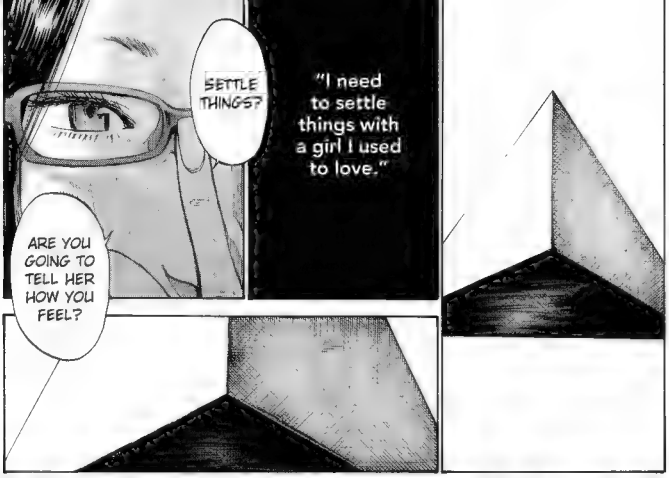
HOW GRATIFY-ING.
I'M PRIVILEGED TO HAVE BEEN A PART OF YOUR CHARACTER ARC.
AHA HA HA!
DO YOU WANT ANOTHER OOLONG TEA?

BY THE WAY...

DRAWNG BLOCK
...DO YOU REMEMBER...
...WHEN I ASKED YOU TO WRITE A STORY TO BE ILLUSTRATED?
I'M COMPLETELY INTO YOU WRITING IT NOW.
I DON'T CARE IF YOU HAVE TALENT OR NOT.
I WANT YOU TO WRITE IT BECAUSE I'M INTERESTED IN YOU.
NO WAY NO WAY

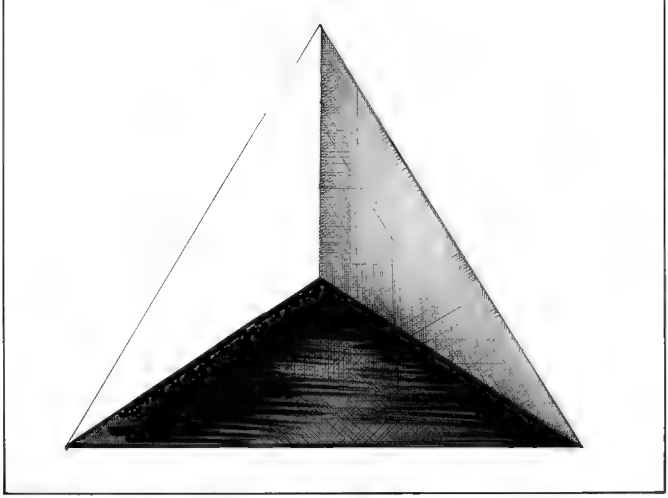
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "NO WAY"? YOU'RE NOT DOING ANYTHING ELSE.
I ASKED MR. SHISHIDO FOR YOUR ADDRESS.
YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM ME.
PUNPUN ...
I GET THAT YOU'RE REALLY EARNEST ...
...BUT IS THERE A POINT TO YOU JUST HIDING AWAY?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR ISSUE IS...
...AND I GET THAT IF YOU'RE BY YOURSELF YOU CAN'T HURT ANYONE.
BUT THE WORLD ISN'T SIMPLE ENOUGH FOR YOU TO SURVIVE ALL ON YOUR OWN.
AND BESIDES, YOU'RE NOT THAT STRONG...
AM I RIGHT?

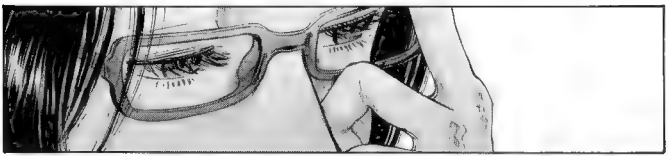
"I...I have something I need to do."


"I need to settle things with a girl I used to love."
SETTLE THINGS?
ARE YOU GOING TO TELL HER HOW YOU FEEL?

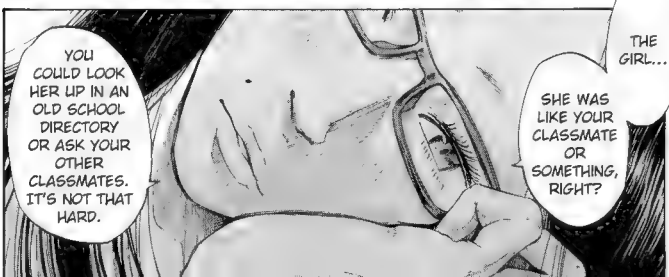
"...so today, just like every other day, I walked around town looking for her."
"...but I feel like I need to see her again..."
"No, not really..."

HMM...
YOU MEAN, YOU'RE JUST NOT OVER HER?
THAT'S SO INEFFI-CIENT...
HOW LONG CAN YOU KEEP IT UP?
"For two years..."
"...until the lease is up on my apartment."
AND IF YOU DON'T FIND HER BY THEN?





HMM ...
NO COMMENT.


THE GIRL...
SHE WAS LIKE YOUR CLASSMATE OR SOMETHING, RIGHT?
YOU COULD LOOK HER UP IN AN OLD SCHOOL DIRECTORY OR ASK YOUR OTHER CLASSMATES. IT'S NOT THAT HARD.

YOU KNOW...
MAYBE YOU DON'T REALLY WANT TO FIND HER.
MAYBE YOU ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO A MOMENTOUS REUNION...
...BUT WHAT'S THE POINT?
I SUSPECT IT WON'T BE JUST TWO YEARS.
I THINK IN TEN YEARS YOU'LL STILL BE LOOKING FOR EXCUSES.
YOU'LL APPEAR CONFLICTED ...
...BUT IN REALITY YOU'LL BE LIVING AN UNPRODUCTIVE LIFE WITHOUT THINKING OR DOING A THING.
I DON'T MIND.
LOTS OF PEOPLE ARE SATISFIED PLAYING THE DESPAIR GAME.
BUT I THINK YOUR DESPAIR IS POINTLESS.
BECAUSE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOLITUDE TOO, WHICH MEANS THERE'S NO ONE TO SHARE YOUR DESPAIR WITH.

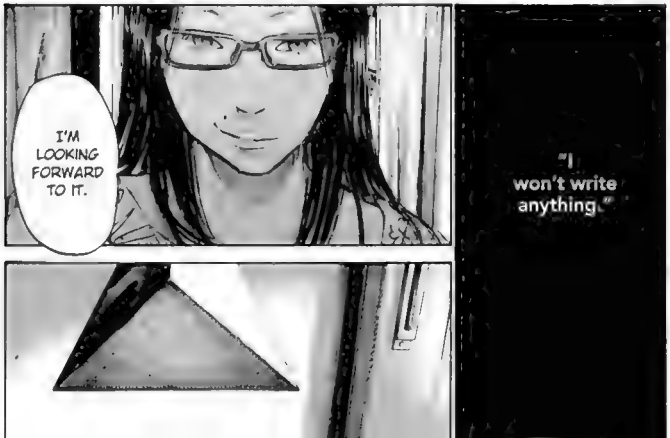
SO, PUNPUN ...
I THINK BUMPING INTO ME AGAIN WAS LIKE FATE.
BUT WHETHER YOU ACCEPT IT AS FATE OR A MERE COINCIDENCE IS UP TO YOU.
SO, WHAT'LL YOU DO...?
DO YOU WANT ME TO FIND THAT GIRL FOR YOU?
I'M INTERESTED IN WHAT YOU MEAN BY "SETTLING THINGS."
SO WHY DON'T YOU PACK UP THAT WISPY MEMORY ...
...AND USE YOUR BRAIN FOR A HAPPIER, MORE FUN TOMORROW?

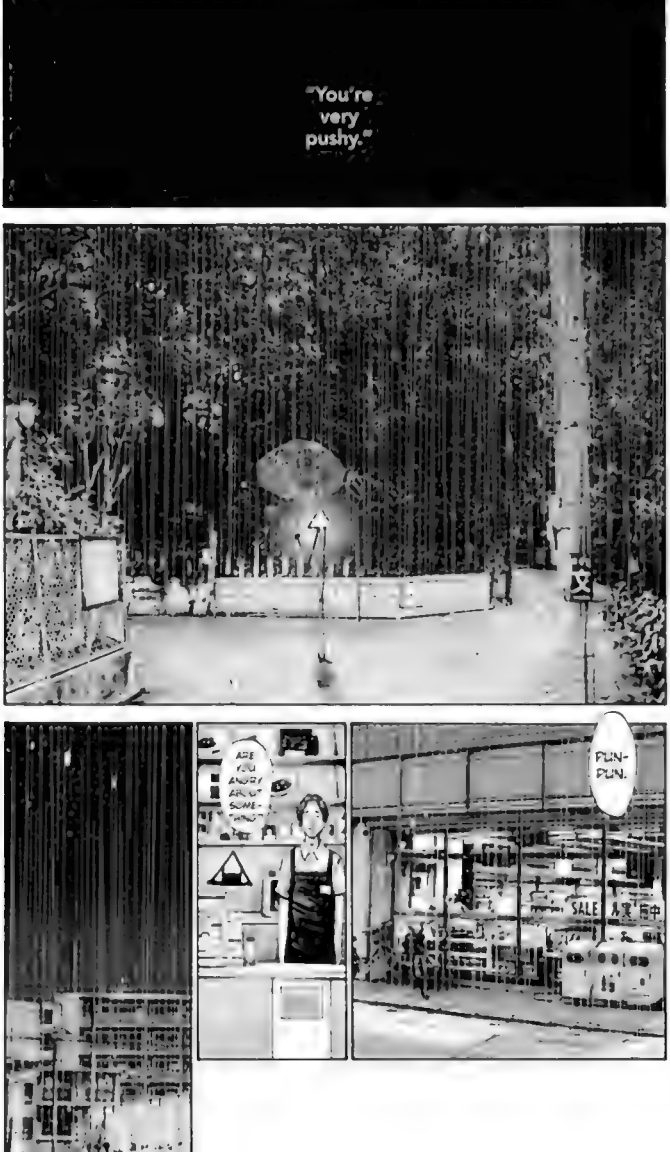
"Stop it."
SO...
...TELL ME HER NAME.
I'LL BRING HER TO YOU IN THREE DAYS.
Sstop it!

THEN DIE RIGHT NOW!

EVEN IF YOU JUST WRITE A LITTLE BIT, I WANT TO SEE IT.
OH, HERE...
MY NUMBER.
"I'm going home."

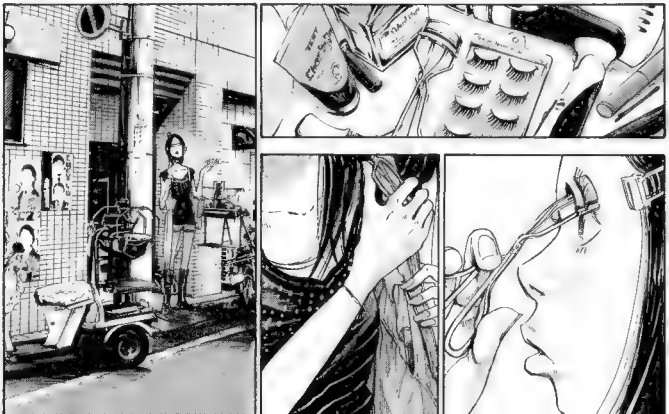
Sachihiro
090-


I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.
"I won't write anything."

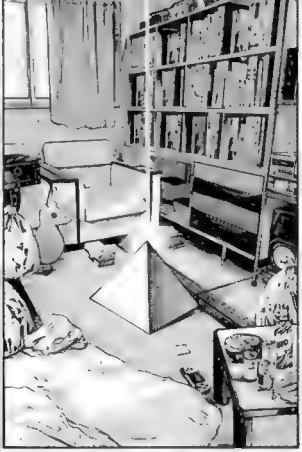

"You're very pushy."
ARE YOU ANGRY ABOUT SOMETHING?
PUN-PUN.
SALE

BEEEEEP
BEEEEEP
BEEEEEP
BEEEEEP

BEEEEEP
BEEEEEP



SHINJUKU, CHIYODA LINE
SHINJUKU 8:25 10 CARS
DESTINATION
TRAIN WON'T STOP



...couldn't step foot out of his apartment that day.

Punpun...

He was very, very annoyed.

He was annoyed.

Chapter 82

I'M A MATH TEACHER. I LOVE ABSOLUTES.

WHEN I WAS A STUDENT, I HATED LIBERAL ARTS, FINE ARTS AND THE OCCULT.

I'M NOT INTERESTED IN THE WISHY-WASHY, PATHETIC, FLEETING VALUES INVENTED BY MANKIND.

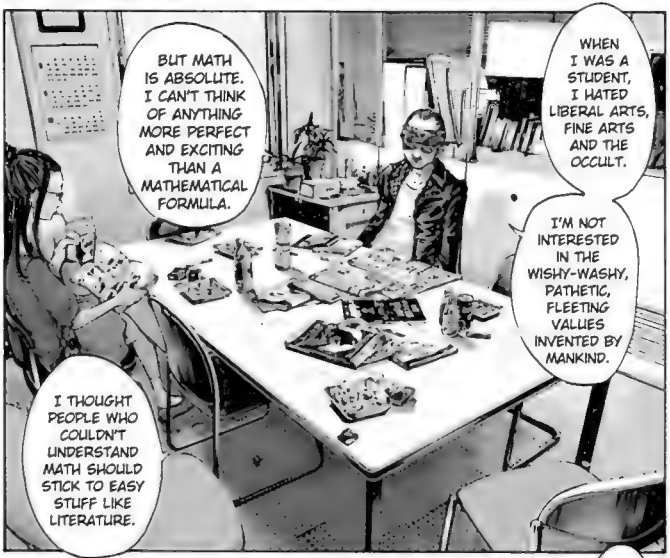
BUT MATH IS ABSOLUTE. I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING MORE PERFECT AND EXCITING THAN A MATHEMATICAL FORMULA.

I THOUGHT PEOPLE WHO COULDN'T UNDERSTAND MATH SHOULD STICK TO EASY STUFF LIKE LITERATURE.

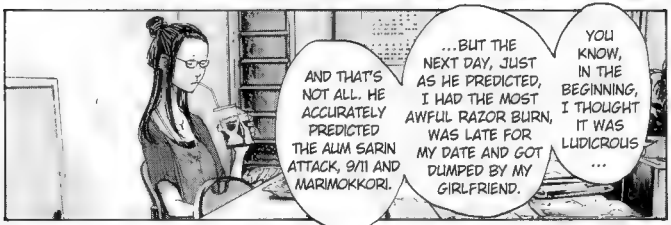
I WAS RESO-LUTE.

UNTIL I MET THIS GUY.

THE FIRST TIME I MET HIM WAS ON CAMPUS. HE WAS STARK-NAKED AND HUMMING.



I ASKED HIM WHAT SONG IT WAS, AND HE LOOKED AT ME WITH CHILDLIKE EYES AND SAID...
"THIS IS THE SONG I HEARD LAST NIGHT IN MY DREAMS, AND IT PREDICTS YOUR TOMORROW."
IT WAS AN UNUSUAL MELODY, AND IT DREW ME IN, EVEN THOUGH I'M NOT INTERESTED IN MUSIC AT ALL.


AND THAT'S NOT ALL. HE ACCURATELY PREDICTED THE AUM SARIN ATTACK, 9/11 AND MARIMOKKORI.
...BUT THE NEXT DAY, JUST AS HE PREDICTED, I HAD THE MOST AWFUL RAZOR BURN, WAS LATE FOR MY DATE AND GOT DUMPED BY MY GIRLFRIEND.
YOU KNOW, IN THE BEGINNING, I THOUGHT IT WAS LUDICROUS ...

HE REMINDED ME OF RAMANUJAN, THE GENIUS MATHEMATICIAN WHO SAID A GODDESS CAME TO HIM IN HIS DREAMS AND TAUGHT HIM THEOREMS.
NOT ONLY DOES HE NOT USE HIS TALENT FOR GAIN, HE DOESN'T EVEN BRAG ABOUT IT OR TRY TO PROVE IT'S REAL.
AND HIS SOUL IS REALLY PURE.

...I MIGHT BE JUST AN ORDINARY GUY, BUT I EXIST TO PROVE THE GREATNESS OF A GENIUS.
AND THEN I REALIZED ...

A DIVINE MIRACLE IS INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM SCIENCE IF IT CAN BE PROVEN.
THAT'S A GREAT AMBITION.
FORTUNATELY, HE'S AN INNOCENT AND VERY KIND.
HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS HUMANITY IS TOTALLY MERCIFUL.
PEOPLE NEED TO UNDERSTAND HIS MERCY. AND IT IS MY JOB TO SHOW THEM.

WELL, THANK YOU FOR THAT RIDICULOUS STORY.
YOU'VE LIVED UP TO YOUR REPUTATION AS A UNIQUE PERVERT.
BY THE WAY, I HEARD ONE OF THE GIRLS SAY THAT YOUR SPIT IS POISONOUS AND MAKES YOUR FACE ROT.

WELL ...
HE ACTUALLY HAS A SMALL FORTUNE. HIS DAD WAS A RELIGIOUS LEADER, YOU KNOW.
SO PART OF ME THINKS AN ORDINARY GUY LIKE ME CAN GET IN GOOD WITH HIM AND MAKE A LITTLE MONEY.

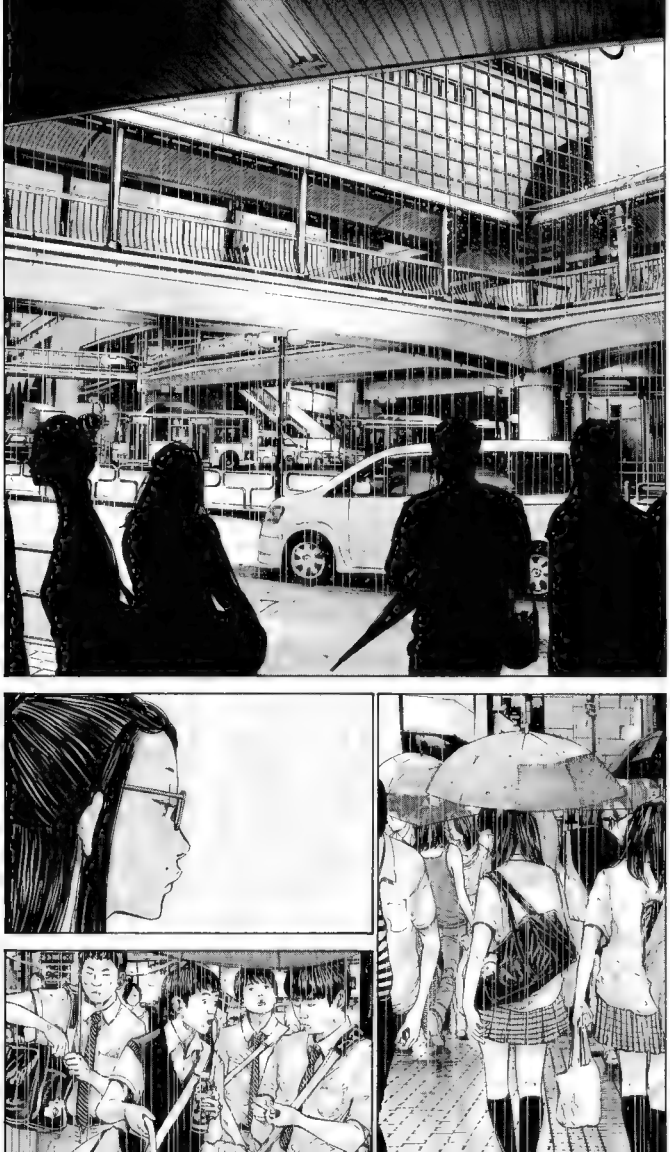
SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD PLAN. WE'RE IN A RECESSION, SO RELIGION IS PROBABLY POPULAR NOW.
FOR ME, IT'S SO SHADY IT'S A JOKE.
BUT, MR. WADA, YOU'RE EVEN SLEAZIER THAN YOU LOOK. I'M STRANGELY COMFORTED.

WAS THAT A COMPLI-MENT?
YOU SHOULD GO OUT WITH ME!
IN WHAT CONTEXT WAS THAT APPROPRI-ATE?
ARE YOU STUPID?
OH, AND ANOTHER THING...
STOP WAITING AROUND FOR ME AFTER WORK AND PRETENDING IT'S JUST A COINCIDENCE.
IF YOU KEEP IT UP, I'LL REPORT YOU TO THE POLICE FOR STALKING.

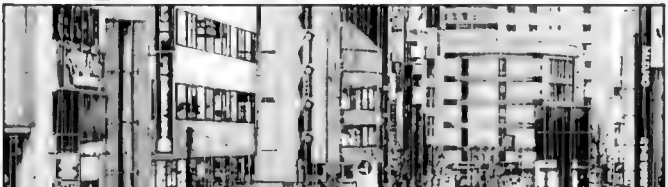
SEE YOU LATER.

GOOD VIBRATIONS.
TEST
PERSONAL
TUTORS
EMI

USED
PCS APPLIANCE
SEMINAR



YO.

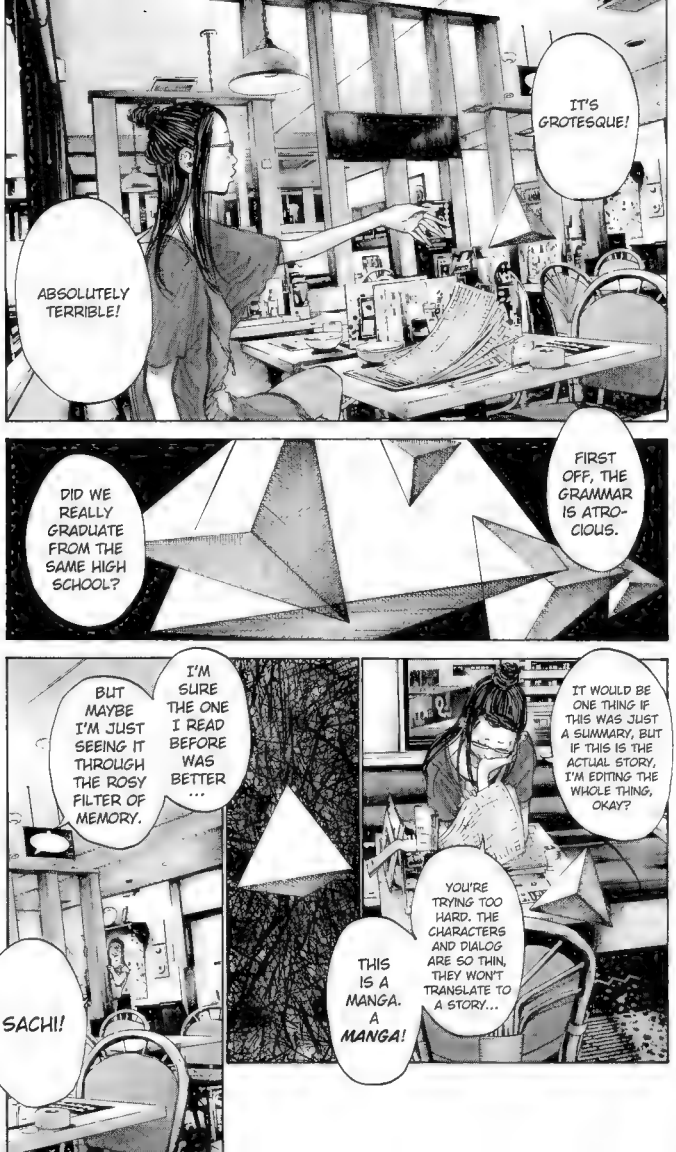


COFFEE & RESTAURANT
that's
HONESTLY ...
...I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D COME UP WITH SOMETHING THIS QUICKLY.

I MEAN, I WAS HOPING, BUT...

...I WAS FEELING A LITTLE GUILTY ABOUT BEING SO PUSHY.
be?
might
not be.
a strange

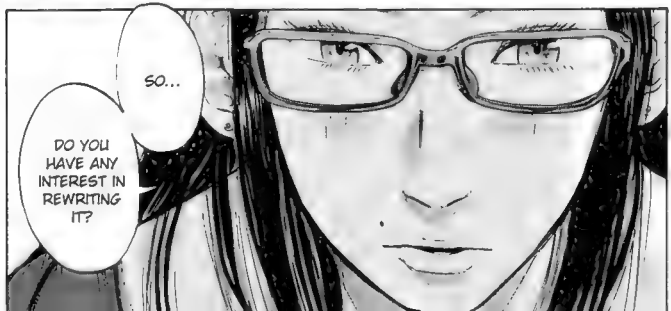
HMM...
WOW.

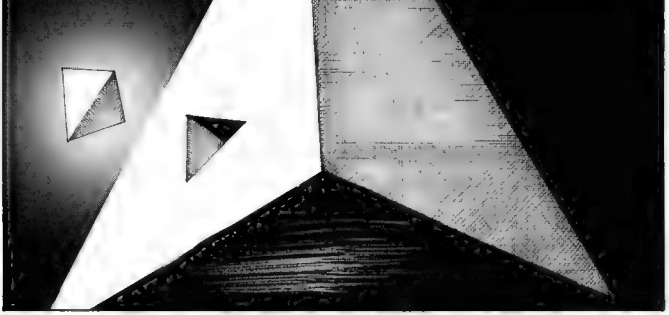

IT'S GROTESQUE!
ABSOLUTELY TERRIBLE!
FIRST OFF, THE GRAMMAR IS ATROCIOUS.
DID WE REALLY GRADUATE FROM THE SAME HIGH SCHOOL?
IT WOULD BE ONE THING IF THIS WAS JUST A SUMMARY, BUT IF THIS IS THE ACTUAL STORY, I'M EDITING THE WHOLE THING, OKAY?
YOU'RE TRYING TOO HARD. THE CHARACTERS AND DIALOG ARE SO THIN, THEY WON'T TRANSLATE TO A STORY...
THIS IS A MANGA. A MANGA!
I'M SURE THE ONE I READ BEFORE WAS BETTER ...
BUT MAYBE I'M JUST SEEING IT THROUGH THE ROSY FILTER OF MEMORY.
SACHI!

SHINY, SHINY... ☆
SORRY TO KEEP YOU. ☆
YOU'RE LATE, DUMB-ASS...
HURRY UP AND SIT DOWN. YOU'RE AN EYESORE.
PUNPUN, IT'S BEEN A WHILE...
I'M KANIE, THE OLDER SISTER. BYUBA! ☆
SACHI, ARE YOU STILL DOING PICTURE BOOKS?
THAT'S RIGHT.
CAN I TAKE YOUR ORDER?
I WAS A RABBIT IN A PREVIOUS LIFE, SO I'LL HAVE A SMALL SALAD.

KANIE, I SEE YOU'VE SUNK TO BEING A CORPORATE SLAVE.
SO WHAT? I'VE MADE TIME FOR YOU OUT OF MY SHITTY BUSY SCHEDULE.
SO...
...HOW IS "IF YOU POLISH IT, HE WILL SHINE" GOING?
WERE YOU RIGHT?

PUNPUN...
GETTING BACK ON TOPIC, I THINK YOU CAN DO MUCH BETTER.
NO NEED TO BE EMBARRASSED.
JUST WRITE LIKE YOU USED TO, WHATEVER COMES TO MIND NATURALLY.


SO...
DO YOU HAVE ANY INTEREST IN REWRITING IT?



"I think it's best for both of us if I don't take this any further."

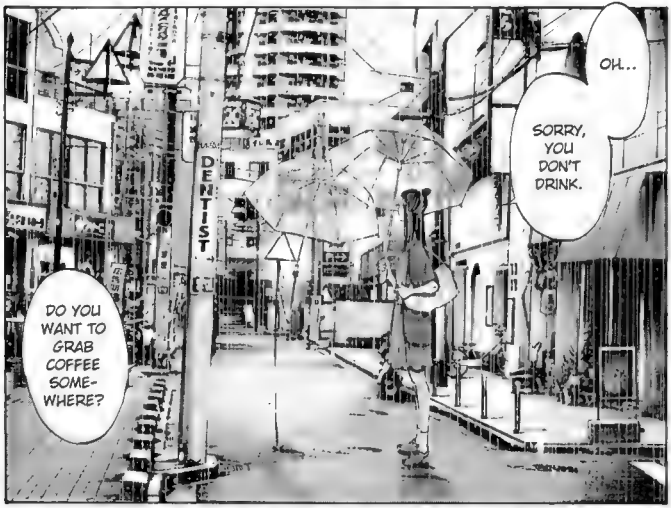
SHE'S PUSHY, OVER-BEARING AND RUDE.
SHE'S A SELF-ACTUAL-IZATION DEMON.
ONCE SACHI STARTS ON A PROJECT, SHE WON'T LET UP.
WHAT A CATAS-TROPHE. I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU, ONODERA.
HMM.
WELL, SACHI THINKS SHE'S TRYING TO RESCUE YOU...
AND SHE REALLY DOES SEE PROMISE IN YOU. TRUST ME ON THAT.
BUT SHE WAS REALLY HAPPY THAT SHE RAN IN-TO YOU AGAIN.
SHE'S FURIOUSLY PADDLING BENEATH THE SURFACE ALL THE TIME.
SHE LOOKS NONCHALANT, BUT SHE'S BLUFFING HARD.
...BUT I'M HOPING YOU CAN RESCUE HER.
ONCE AN UGLY DUCKLING AND ALL THAT.
SHE'S LIKE A SWAN...
...IN A LOT OF WAYS.

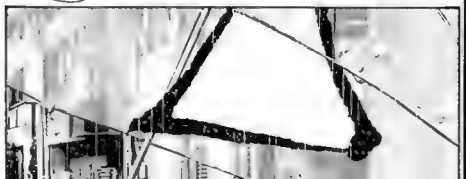
I'VE KNOWN HER SINCE WE WERE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL...
...AND SHE'S ALWAYS HAD A SKETCHBOOK WITH HER.
IN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL, SHE WON TONS OF AWARDS, LIKE THE GOVERNOR'S PRIZE, FOR HER DRAWINGS.

SHE HAD PRETENSIONS OF GENIUS. WELL, SHE REALLY WAS VERY TALENTED.
BUT IT DIDN'T LAST. IT JUST SUDDENLY DRIED UP.
SHE STARTED AT WASEDA UNIVERSITY WITH ME, BUT THEN SHE ENDED UP DROPPING OUT.

SHE'S TALKING ABOUT ILLUSTRATING PICTURE BOOKS AS A HOBBY...
...BUT WHAT IS SHE REALLY THINKING?
I THINK IT'S TIME TO PUT AN END TO HER DELUSIONS.

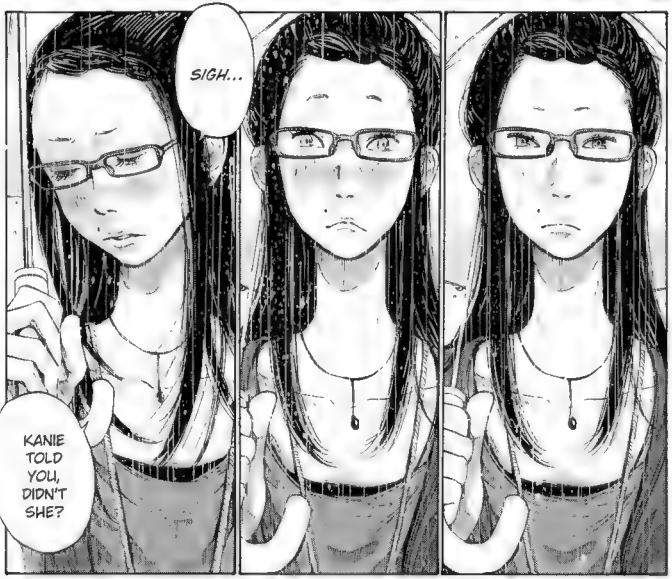
SHE WAS WORKING HARD IN COLLEGE TOWARDS THAT GOAL, AND SHE WAS REALLY CLOSE TO LANDING A SERIES, BUT IT DIDN'T WORK OUT.
TO BE A MANGA ARTIST.
...WHAT DO YOU THINK SACHI'S REAL DREAM WAS AS A KID?
BY THE WAY...
THE FAILURE WAS TOO MUCH FOR HER, AND SHE'S REPRESSED IT.
SHE CAN'T WRITE STORIES.
SHE USED TO GET ALL WORKED UP...
...ABOUT HOW SHE WAS GOING TO DESTROY THE WORLD WITH HER MANGA.



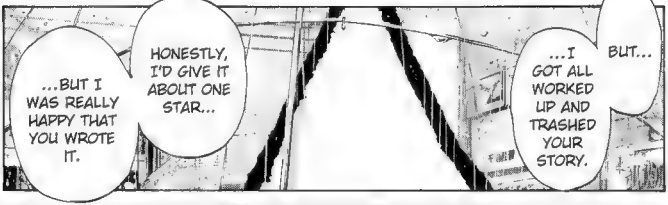


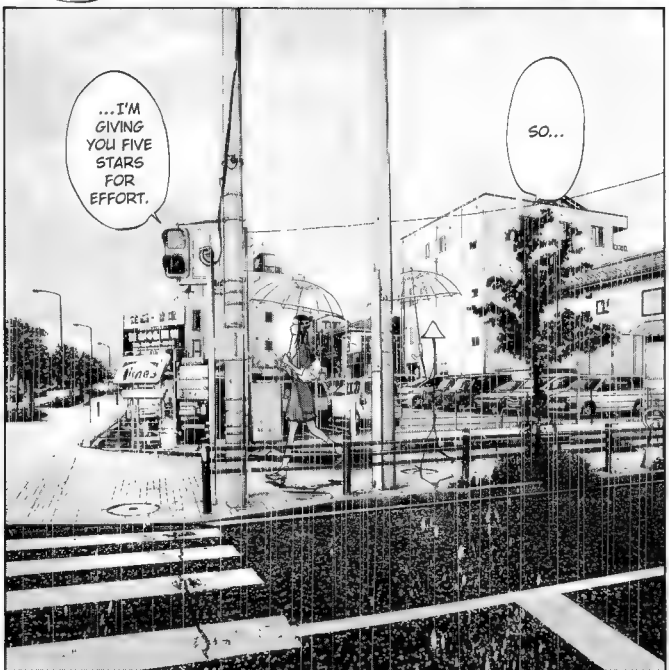
"I'm going to go home early and do a rewrite."

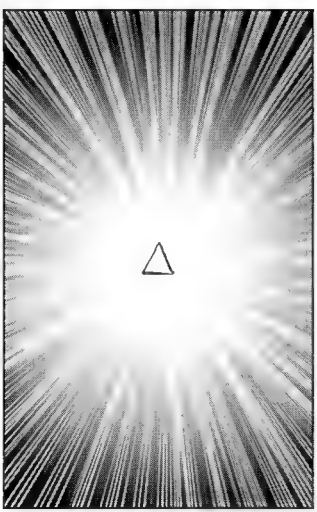
"Does it have to be manga, Nanjo?"



I CAN'T DO IT YET.
YEAH ...


...BUT I WAS REALLY HAPPY THAT YOU WROTE IT.
HONESTLY, I'D GIVE IT ABOUT ONE STAR...
...I GOT ALL WORKED UP AND TRASHED YOUR STORY.
BUT...


...I'M GIVING YOU FIVE STARS FOR EFFORT.
SO...



TEN FLOORS OF RE-INFORCED CONCRETE, AND YOU'RE ON THE EIGHTH.
ALL THE BUILDINGS AROUND HERE ARE SHORT, SO YOU HAVE A GREAT VIEW.
IT'S A STUDIO, BUT WITH 380 SQUARE FEET, THERE'S PLENTY OF SPACE.
FIVE-MINUTE WALK TO THE STATION, AND IT'S ¥750. THAT'S ABOUT MARKET RATE.
WE MANAGE THE BUILDING, SO YOU HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

YOUR MANAGE-MENT STYLE IS PRETTY SLOPPY.
YEAH. PRETEND YOU DIDN'T SEE THAT.
I THINK THE KEY'S RIGHT HERE.

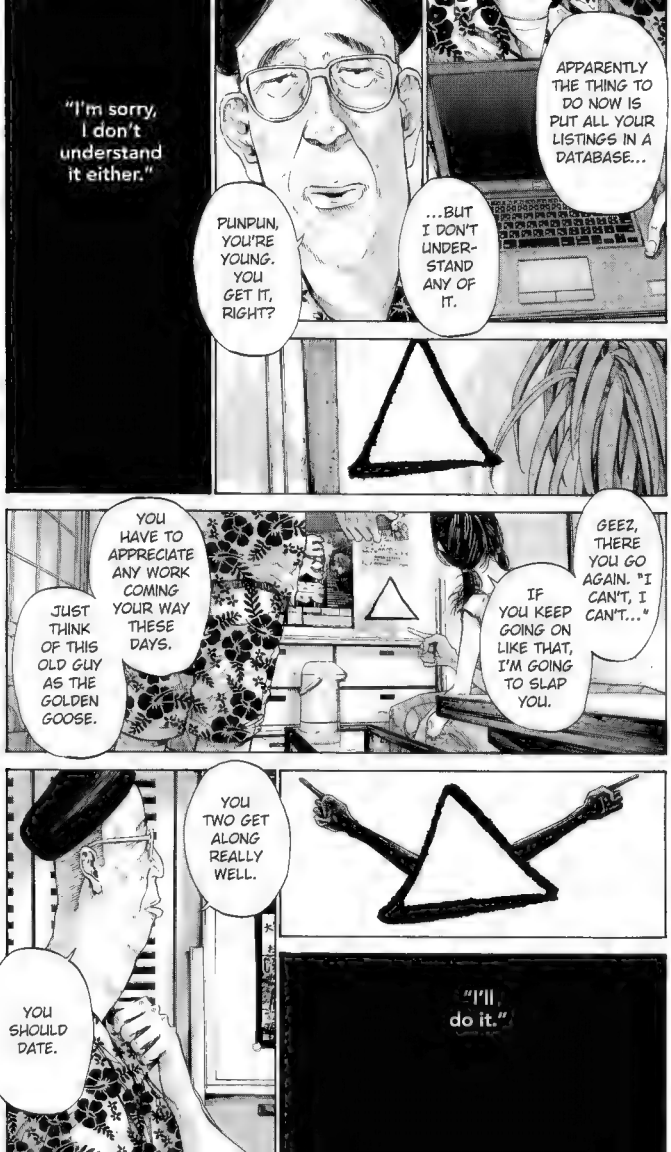
AHEM.
IT'S CRAPPY ON THE OUTSIDE BUT NICE AND CLEAN INSIDE.
HEY, THIS IS NICE.

HMM?

OWW!
... WHOA.
... WHOA ...
OOPS ...
I'VE GOT AN OLD BALANCED FLUE TUB AND IT SUCKS.
NO WAY, THE BATHROOM IS NEW?

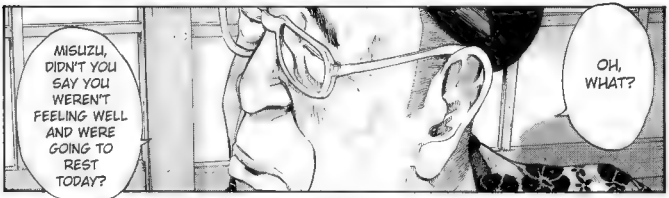
SHISHIDO REAL ESTATE
HAS THE BLEEDING STOPPED?
FOR THE TIME BEING.
SORRY ABOUT THAT.
I HAVE AN OLD SCAR THERE, AND IT SPLITS EASILY.
WELL, THAT'S SCARY.

第62回
大花火大会
SO, SACHI, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO? DO YOU WANT IT?
UMM.
IF YOU DON'T DECIDE QUICKLY, SOMEONE ELSE MIGHT GRAB IT.
THERE'S THIS GUY AT WORK WHO'S KIND OF STALKING ME, AND HE FOUND OUT WHERE I LIVE.
IT'S CREEPY, BUT IT PISSES ME OFF TO MOVE BECAUSE OF HIM.
BUT...
...THAT APARTMENT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD PLACE TO WORK.
HUH?
ARE YOU CHANGING JOBS, SACHI?
OH.
NO, NO, IT'S NOTHING.
SPEAKING OF WORK...
I KNOW I ASKED YOU BEFORE, PUNPUN...
...BUT DO YOU HAVE ANY INTEREST IN WORKING HERE PART-TIME?


"I'm sorry, I don't understand it either."
PUNPUN, YOU'RE YOUNG. YOU GET IT, RIGHT?
...BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF IT.
APPARENTLY THE THING TO DO NOW IS PUT ALL YOUR LISTINGS IN A DATABASE...
JUST THINK OF THIS OLD GUY AS THE GOLDEN GOOSE.
YOU HAVE TO APPRECIATE ANY WORK COMING YOUR WAY THESE DAYS.
IF YOU KEEP GOING ON LIKE THAT, I'M GOING TO SLAP YOU.
GEEZ, THERE YOU GO AGAIN. "I CAN'T, I CAN'T..."
YOU TWO GET ALONG REALLY WELL.
YOU SHOULD DATE.
"I'll do it."

NO WAY.
OH.
HEY!

HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU? WE DON'T HAVE THE MONEY FOR PART-TIME HELP!
YOU ALWAYS DO THIS. YOU'RE TOO NICE, YOU IDIOT!
EVERY TIME YOU WENT OUT FOR A WALK, YOU'D BRING HOME STRAY CATS. HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN HOW THE HOUSE WAS COVERED IN POOP?
DO YOU WANT ME TO HIT YOU WITH THE MALLET AGAIN?


OH, WHAT?
MISUZU, DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU WEREN'T FEELING WELL AND WERE GOING TO REST TODAY?

FINALLY YOU STOPPED BRINGING CATS HOME, BUT THEN YOU STARTED PICKING UP LUCKY CAT STATUES FROM ALL OVER...
...AND EVEN WITH ALL OF THEM, WE *STILL* DON'T HAVE ANY CUSTOMERS!
IT WOULD BE BETTER IF WE TORE THIS PLACE DOWN AND TURNED IT INTO A PARKING LOT.
YOU GOT THAT, OLD MAN?

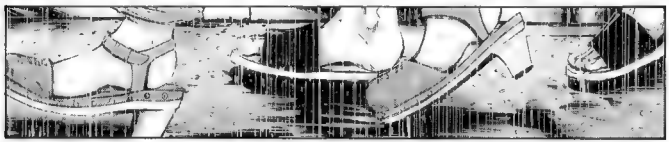
THERE, THERE.
GO AND LIE DOWN SOME MORE.

AND YOU... YOU...!
YOU DON'T EVEN BOTHER LOOKING FOR A JOB! YOU JUST SIT AROUND WAITING FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO HAND YOU ONE!
YOU NEED TO EARN A LIVING! IT'S ABOUT HARD WORK AND SETTING GOALS, NO EXCUSES!
BUT YOU WALK AROUND LIKE YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD, TOTALLY DISCONNECTED FROM EVERYTHING.
YOU MILLENNIALS ARE SO ARROGANT...
...THINKING YOU'RE SO SPECIAL WITH YOUR CLEVER WORDS.
BUT WHEN YOU HIT A WALL, YOU JUST INVENT JUSTIFICATIONS FOR YOUR FAILURE...
...LIKE THE HIRING POLICY WAS UNFAIR, THE ECONOMY IS DOWN, WORKING IS GIVING IN!
BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT THE REAL WORLD IS LIKE!
THE PREVIOUS GENERATIONS WENT UP AGAINST AN UNFAIR SOCIETY, AND THEY LOST AND GOT SWALLOWED UP! THAT'S REALITY!

GARBAGE IS GARBAGE, NO MATTER WHAT YEAR IT IS.
YOU'RE SO NAIVE!
YOU DON'T GET TO ACT SO SUPERIOR ...
...WHILE YOU HIDE FROM REALITY.
ISN'T THAT A BIT MUCH?
W-WAIT...
...A MINUTE.
HOW'S HE GOING TO LEARN IF I DON'T SAY IT?
OHH...
IT'S BEST TO KEEP THINGS SIMPLE FOR IDIOTS.
WELL, SURE...
...BUT BEING NASTY LIKE THAT JUST BETRAYS YOUR ROOTS.

PUNPUN MIGHT BE A FEW CARDS SHORT OF A FULL DECK...
...BUT I TAKE EXCEPTION TO YOU CRITICIZING AN ENTIRE GENERATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
CIRCUMSTANCES?
THERE'S NO CIRCUMSTANCE ON EARTH THAT MAKES IT OKAY FOR A HEALTHY YOUNG MAN TO LOAF AROUND.
OKAY, SO WHAT IF HE FORCES HIMSELF TO GO TO WORK AND THEN BECOMES A MEMBER OF THE WORKING POOR...
...AND HE BECOMES SICK AND DEPRESSED. CAN I HOLD YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT?
HO.
HO-WEE.
OF COURSE!
HE CAN GET LOADS OF BENEFITS FROM ALL THE TAXES I PAY.
THERE, THERE, THERE.
CALM DOWN, BOTH OF YOU.

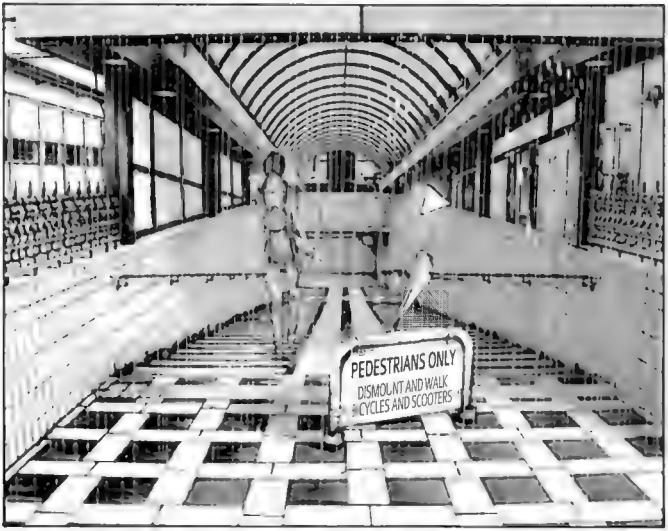
I'M LEAVING.
HMPH.
I WIN!
HAH! I'M SO, SO BUSY!

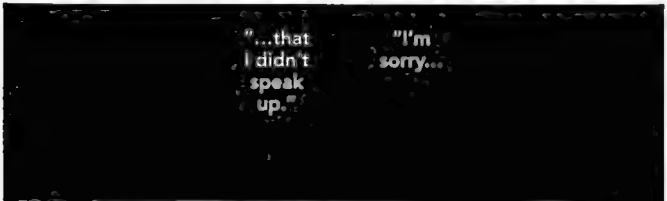


I'M SORRY.
SO SORRY, YOU TWO.

I THINK MAYBE SHE'S MENO-PAUSAL.
SHE NEVER MARRIED.
MY DAUGHTER IS REALLY ON EDGE LATELY.
IT'S BEEN A...
...LONG RAINY SEASON THIS YEAR.
I'LL CALL YOU WHEN MY DAUGH-TER'S NOT AROUND.
PUNPUN, STOP BY AGAIN.
I'LL TRY NOT TO SHOW IT TO ANYONE ELSE.
SO, SACHI, GIVE THAT APART-MENT SOME THOUGHT.
YEAH.
YOU'RE TOO NICE, MR. SHISHIDO.
CLEARANCE 9 FT

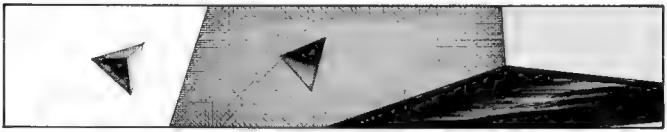
SORRY YOU HAD TO DEAL WITH THAT...
...JUST BECAUSE I ASKED YOU TO COME ALONG FOR A SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT APARTMENT HUNT.


PEDESTRIANS ONLY
DISMOUNT AND WALK
CYCLES AND SCOOTERS

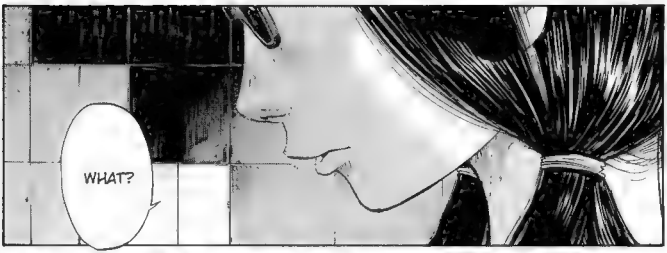

"...that I didn't speak up."
"I'm sorry..."

NEVER MIND.
APOLOGIES ARE CHEAP.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO MISUNDERSTAND.
I DIDN'T SAY ALL THAT FOR YOU.
I COULDN'T TAKE IT!
I FELT LIKE SHE WAS CRITICIZING WHO I USED TO BE.
I WAS PRETTY DISAPPOINTED...
...WHEN YOU DIDN'T SPEAK UP.

AND JUSTIFYING IT WITH THE FACT THAT YOU AREN'T GOOD AT COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE...
...IS SELF-INDULGENT.
AT THE END OF THE DAY, WE LIVE IN A COMPETITIVE SOCIETY.
BUT YOU KNOW...
...IT'S LIKE THE OLD LADY SAID.
OPTING OUT BECAUSE YOU'RE AFRAID TO LOSE...
...IS SO PATHETIC.
BUT IF YOU WANT TO USE YOUR TROUBLED CHILDHOOD AS AN EXCUSE...
...THEN, BY ALL MEANS, GO AHEAD.
HOW I LIVE *NOW* IS WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT TO ME...
...SO TRYING AND LOSING IS MUCH SCARIER TO ME THAN DYING.
BUT I *HAVE* TO DO IT!
I'M SURE SOMEONE LIKE YOU WHO JUST ROLLS OVER AND GIVES UP WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND.

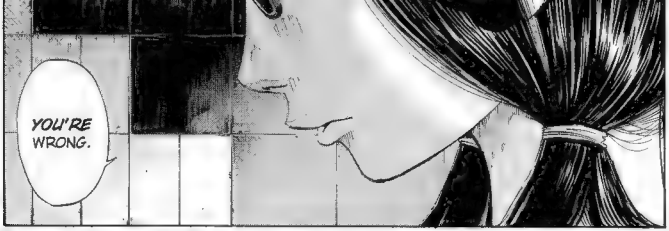


"Isn't that wrong?"



"I think it's cruel and wrong to expect the same kind of confidence from me."

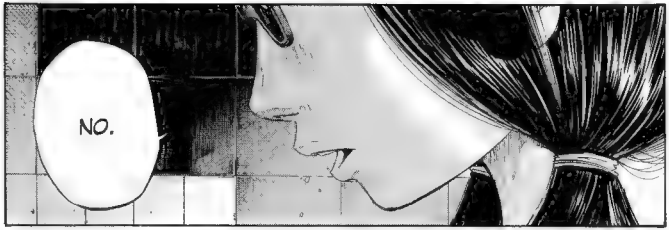
"You're pretty and smart and talented. You started off blessed, so of course you're confidant.



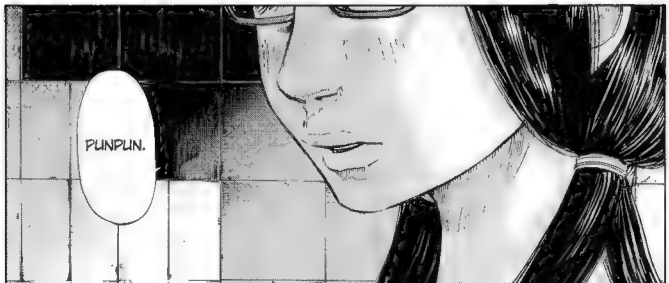
"...and just saying whatever you want and looking down on me."

"...ignoring people's feelings...

"How nice for you...

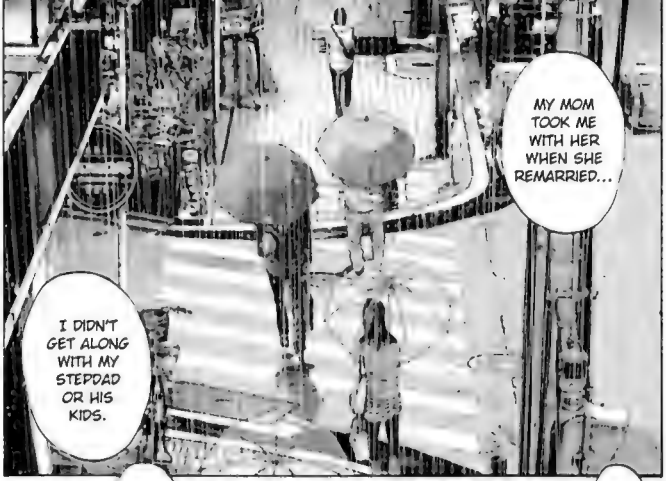


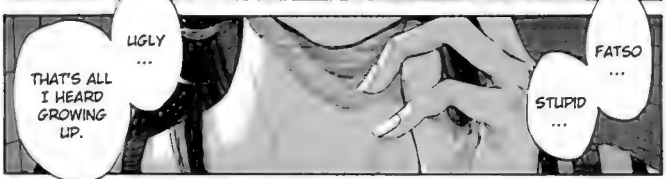
"Please just stop picking on me."



RULES OF CONDUCT
I REALLY...
...DIDN'T WANT...
...TO TELL YOU ANY OF THIS.
I...
MY FACE.
IT'S ALL PLASTIC SURGERY.
SEIYO
SEIYO

Chapter 84


I DIDN'T GET ALONG WITH MY STEPDAD OR HIS KIDS.
MY MOM TOOK ME WITH HER WHEN SHE REMARRIED...


THAT'S ALL I HEARD GROWING UP.
UGLY ...
STUPID ...
FATSO ...

EVERYTHING I DIDN'T LIKE, I HAD REDONE.
... CHEEKS ...
... NOSE ...
...AND THEN I GOT MY EYES...
AS SOON AS I GOT INTO COLLEGE, I WORKED MY ASS OFF IN NIGHT-CLUBS...
...AND STUDIED LIKE I WAS POSSESSED.
SO I STUCK MY FINGER DOWN MY THROAT AS OFTEN AS I COULD ...

I KNOW I NEED MONEY AND LOVE...
...SO OF COURSE I WANT TO BE SUCCESSFUL.
IT'S A SIMPLISTIC, STUPID MOTIVATION, BUT MY CONFIDENCE IS BASED ON MOVING FORWARD.
DREAMS ARE MEANT TO BE FULFILLED.
FUCK THE PAST.
MY BRAIN ...
...MY BODY...
I CHOSE THEM.
AND NO ONE TELLS ME WHAT TO DO.
...MY LIFE.

I HAVE IDEALS.
I'LL DO WHAT I HAVE TO...
...AND I THINK THAT'S THE BEST ME I CAN BE.

WHEN I SEE YOU UNABLE TO MAKE A MOVE BECAUSE YOU'RE SO SAD AND ANXIOUS...
IT'S NOT SO MUCH THAT IT'S IRRITATING.
IT'S LIKE WATCHING THE ME THAT I LEFT BEHIND...
...AND IT MAKES ME FEEL GUILTY.

YOUR ANXIETIES AND DEPRESSION HAVE NO ROOT.
I UNDERSTAND THAT SO MUCH BETTER THAN YOU.
THAT'S WHY I CAN'T FORGIVE YOU...
...AND WHY I CAN'T LEAVE YOU ALONE.
"SHE'S LIKE A SWAN IN A LOT OF WAYS.
"ONCE AN UGLY DUCKLING AND ALL THAT."
YOU'RE LUCKY.
USUALLY WHEN SOMEONE'S BEING PATHETIC LIKE YOU...
...NO ONE EVER STOPS TO HELP.

DISMOUNT AND WALK
BICYCLES AND SCOOTE
MACHIDA POLICE DEPARTMENT
MACHIDA CITY HALL
SORRY...
THAT OLD LADY JUST THREW ME OFF.
OH...
... DAMN.
I HATE CRYING IN FRONT OF PEOPLE.
I'LL...
...CALL YOU LATER.

Nanjo!

"What about the manga?"

A GUY WHO KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT MANGA?
WILL YOU WRITE THE STORY?
"Isn't it cheating to be inconsistent like that?"
SOME-TIMES...
...IDEALS AREN'T ENOUGH.

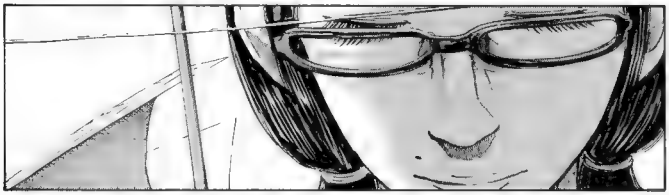
"I'll rewrite it until you approve."

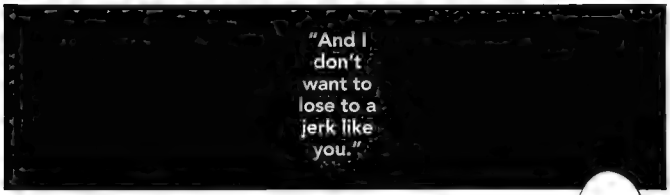
"Of course I will.

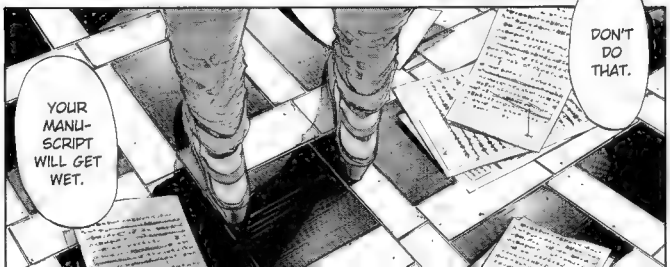
"Will I...?

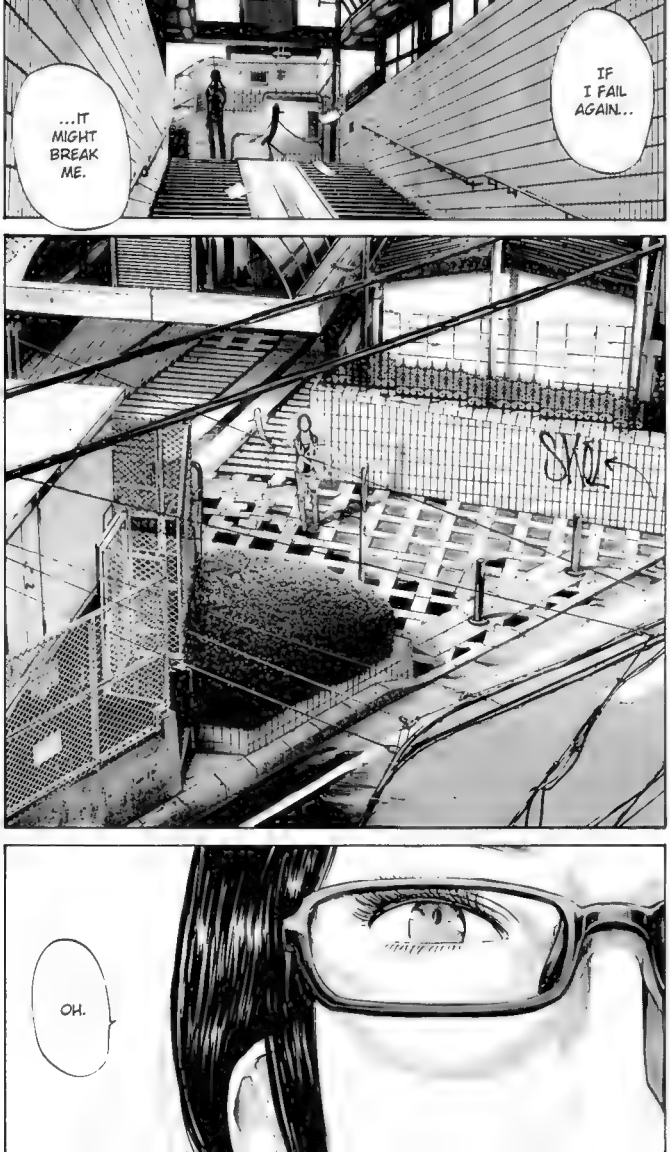
"I have experienced the pleasure of praise.

S ONLY
AND WALK
SCOOTERS



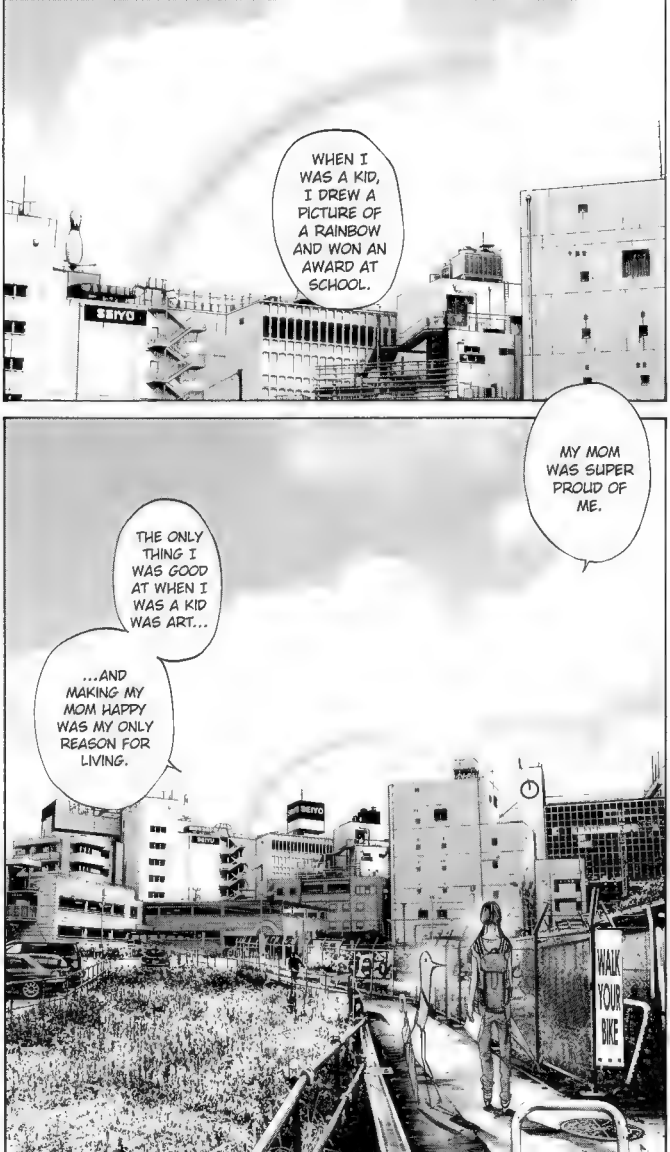

"And I don't want to lose to a jerk like you."


DON'T DO THAT.
YOUR MANU-SCRIPT WILL GET WET.

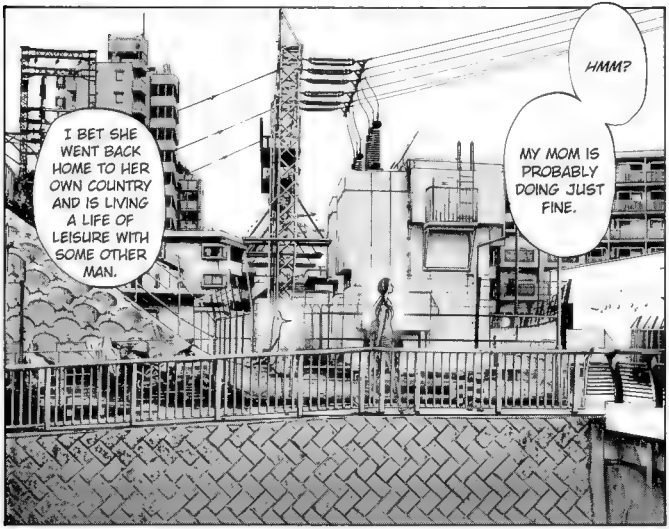

IF I FAIL AGAIN...
...IT MIGHT BREAK ME.
OH.

SPORTS CLUB

THE RAIN...


WHEN I WAS A KID, I DREW A PICTURE OF A RAINBOW AND WON AN AWARD AT SCHOOL.
SEIYO
MY MOM WAS SUPER PROUD OF ME.
THE ONLY THING I WAS GOOD AT WHEN I WAS A KID WAS ART...
...AND MAKING MY MOM HAPPY WAS MY ONLY REASON FOR LIVING.
SEIYO
WALK YOUR BIKE

YOU KNOW, MY MOM WAS AN IMMIGRANT ...
...SO MAYBE SHE WAS USING THEM TO STUDY JAPANESE.
SHE WAS A CHEAP-SKATE, BUT SHE'D BUY ME LOTS OF MANGA, SO I LOVED HER.


I BET SHE WENT BACK HOME TO HER OWN COUNTRY AND IS LIVING A LIFE OF LEISURE WITH SOME OTHER MAN.
HMM?
MY MOM IS PROBABLY DOING JUST FINE.

YEAH.
I THINK I FINALLY FIGURED OUT...
...WHAT I WAS MISSING.
PUNPUN ...
...YOU CAN CALL ME SACHI FROM NOW ON.

THIS TIME...
...I'M GOING TO DESTROY...
...THIS SHITTY WORLD.

IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, I'M COUNTING ON YOU..
... PUNPUN.

...but he decided that for now, he would just give himself over to the approach of summer.

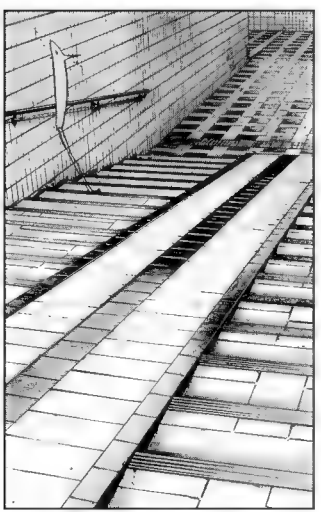
Punpun couldn't deny that he was feeling restless from being tossed about by the sudden high-pressure system...

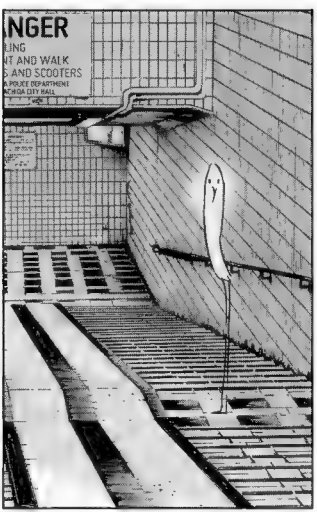
...but he couldn't recall who that somebody was.

...and it reminded him of someone else's hand...

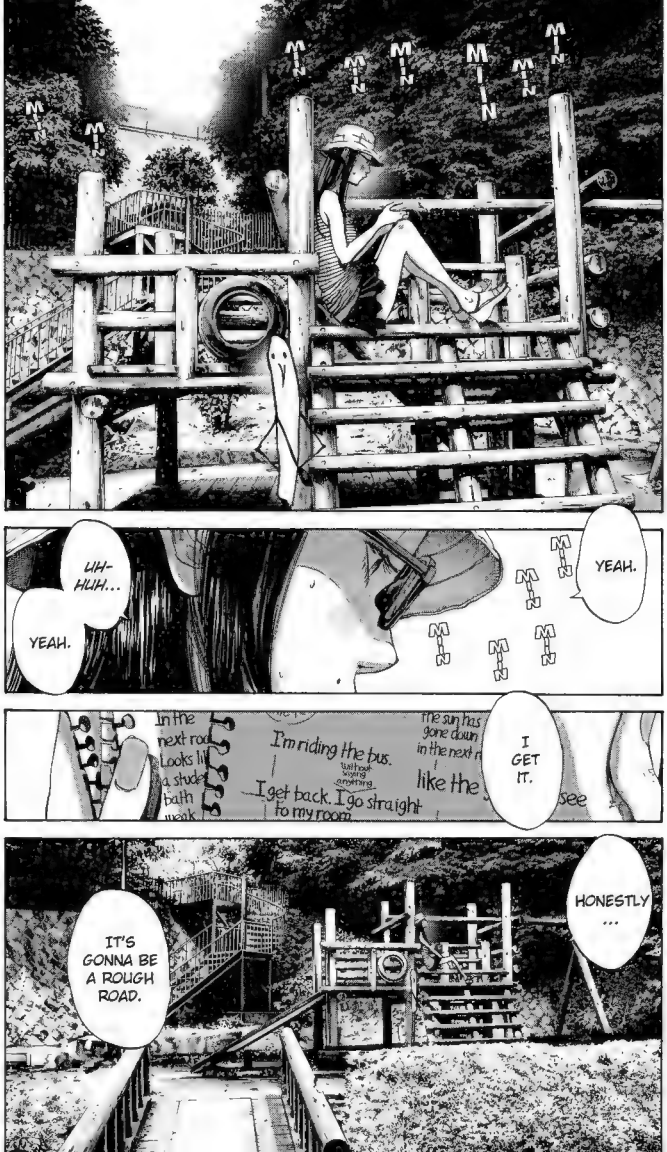
...was much larger and knobbier than he had expected...

Sachi's hand...




NGER
ING
NT AND WALK
S AND SCOOTERS
A POLICE DEPARTMENT
NCHOA CITY HALL

Chapter 85


MIN
MIN
MIN
MIN
MIN
MIN
MIN
MIN
MIN
MIN
MIN
MIN
YEAH.
UH-HUH...
YEAH.
I'm riding the bus.
I get back. I go straight to my room.
like the
I GET IT.
HONESTLY ...
IT'S GONNA BE A ROUGH ROAD.

MIN
MIN
MIN
MIN
YOU'RE TRYING REALLY HARD.
YOU CAME UP WITH ALL THIS IN JUST A COUPLE OF WEEKS.
...I HAVE TO HAND IT TO YOU, PUNPUN.
BUT...
LET'S SHOOT FOR A FINAL DRAFT BY THE END OF SUMMER.
JUST WORK WITH ME ON A FEW MORE THINGS.

MIN
MIN
MIN
MIN
MIN
MIN
AHH.

YO.
HOW'S IT GOING?
I'M MIMURA, ONOTTI'S CLASSMATE.
JUST CALL ME "MIMURA'S MIGHTY ABS."

24
MAMADAKA

SO YOU'RE MOSTLY INTERESTED IN FANTASY AND UNREQUITED-CRUSH MANGA?
I'VE KNOWN ONOTTI SINCE HE WAS *THIS* BIG.
WELL...
WAIT, HAVE I MADE A MISTAKE?
WHO KNEW MY HIDDEN MANGA MANIA WOULD COME IN HANDY?
HE'S ALWAYS OFF GAMING.
HE'S NEVER BEEN SO INTERESTED IN ANYTHING BEFORE.
RIVALS IN LOVE

WE SHOULD ALL GO TO THE BEACH SOON.
WHY?
IT'S SUMMER! WE NEED TO GET OUT THERE WITH OUR SWIMSUITS DIGGING INTO OUR CROTCHES!
WELL, WHEN YOU PUT IT THAT WAY...
CAN I ORDER?
ENTREES
I WAS A FOREST FAIRY IN A PRIOR LIFE, SO I'LL HAVE THE SMALL SALAD.

OUR TREAT.
SERI-OUSLY?!
YUP! ☆
THANK YOU, THANK YOOOU!

LOOK AT YOU.

I WANT TO WRITE...
...IT'S NOT QUITE RIGHT.
YOU KNOW...

IT'S NOT FOR ESCAPING REALITY...
...IT'S FOR *FIGHTING* REALITY.
I WANT IT TO BE SOMETHING THAT AFFECTS YOUR LIFE IN SOME LASTING WAY.
... SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T JUST MOVE YOU OR BRING YOU TO TEARS FOR A FEW SECONDS.

WHAT AM I TRYING TO SAY?
...UMM, ER.
AND ...
AAARGH!

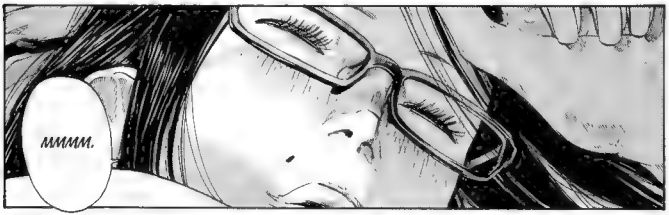
...IT'S GOOD THAT YOU'RE NOT VERY BRIGHT.
YOU KNOW, PUNPUN ...
THINK YOUR OWN THOUGHTS!
DON'T GET TOO CAUGHT UP IN THE WORLD.

OH!
I GOT IT!
NO, I DON'T.

HEE HEE HEE
I DON'T KNOW A THING.

BEEP BEEP!
SO HOT.
EL NIÑO.

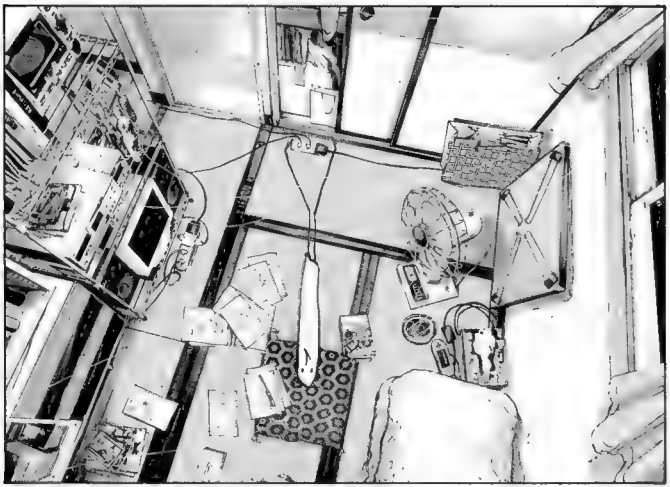
"You shouldn't drink so much."
WHO ASKED YOU?!
YOU JUST WORRY ABOUT YOURSELF.
"I'll try a little harder...
"...Sachi."


MMMM.

LATER ...
... PUNPUN.

...Punpun was a bit let down.

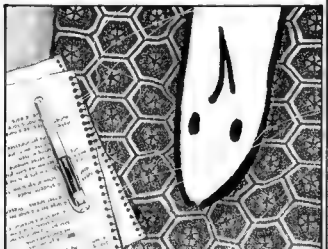
Actually...

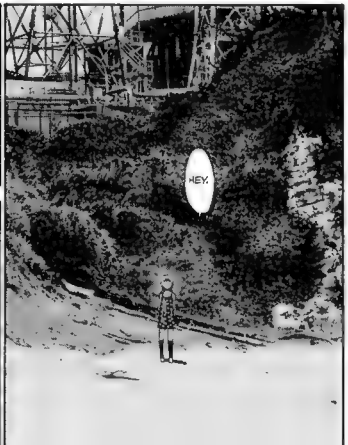


...he thought.

"I can actually do things..."

"Well, what do you know?





Of course, one wrong move and he was sure he'd fall back down that deep, dark hole...

Punpun couldn't get rid of the regret he felt for being unable to change on his own, without getting caught up in someone else.

HEE HEE HEE.

For now, that simple word...

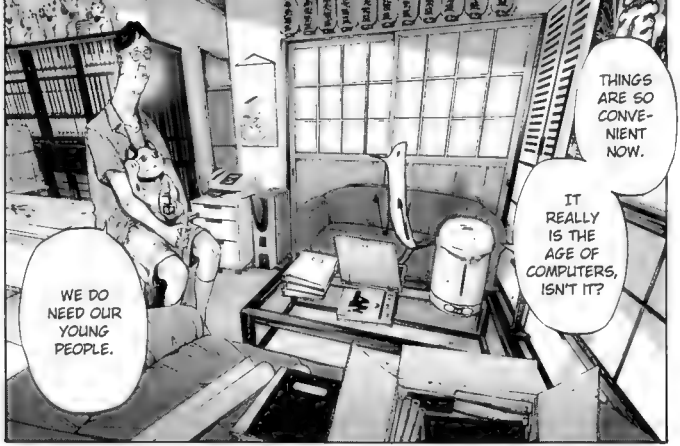
"Later."

...was a magic invocation that made Punpun feel like staying alive until the next time they met was doable.

...IS THIS YOUR FIRST TIME HERE?
OH...
TEACHER'S PET
I CAN'T GIVE YOU A MEMBERSHIP CARD WITHOUT I.D.
NEW RELEASE!

PEW PEW
PEW PEW
PEW PEW
PEW PEW
PEW PEW

PUNPUN...


THINGS ARE SO CONVE-NIENT NOW.
IT REALLY IS THE AGE OF COMPUTERS, ISN'T IT?
WE DO NEED OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

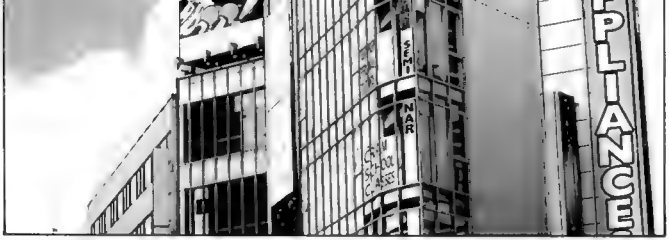
YOU KNOW, PUNPUN, YOU CATCH ON REALLY QUICKLY...
...SO WHY DON'T YOU GET YOUR REAL ESTATE LICENSE?
THEN YOU CAN COME WORK FOR US.
INTRO TO EXCEL

HUH?
CAN'T HEAR A THING.
FWAP
FWAP
WHAT DO YOU THINK, MISUZU? ISN'T THAT A GOOD IDEA?
OH YEAH, WOULD YOU MIND THROWING THAT POSTER AWAY?
IT ENDS TODAY.

YEAH?
NO, IT'S OKAY. I'M TAKING A BREAK, BUYING ART SUPPLIES.
MANGA INK
COMICS
H6
第12回
大花火祭

ARCHITECT
TONIGHT?
THAT'S A LITTLE LAST-MINUTE.
BUT FIREWORKS SOUND COOL.
SUMMER SCHOOL IS IN SESSION, AND WE FINISH AT 5:00. HOW ABOUT I MEET YOU AT THE TRAIN STATION AT 5:30?

OH...
THAT SOUNDS LIKE FUN.
WHY DON'T YOU GO PICK HER UP AT HER WORK?

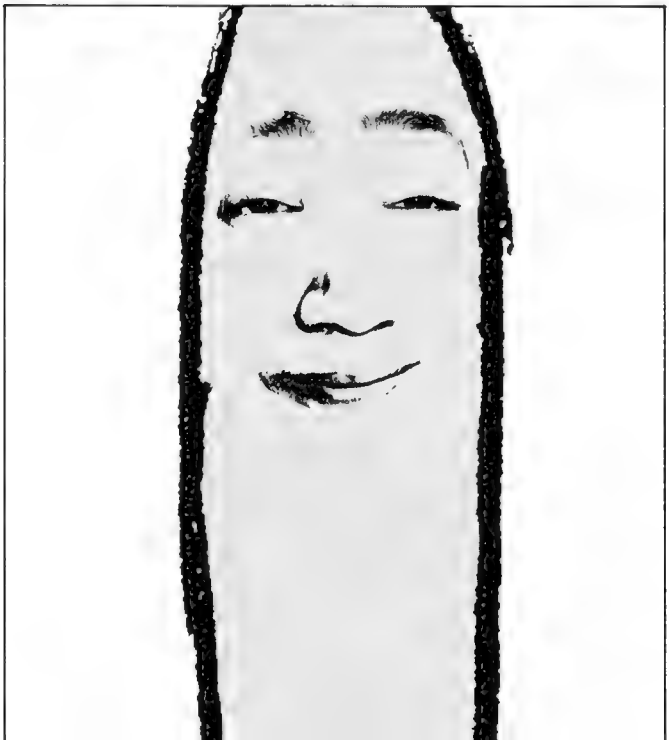

PLIANCE

SHE'S COMING.
MAYBE SHE'S NOT COMING?
SHE'S COMING.
BUT MAYBE NOT.

BUT MAYBE NOT.
SHE'S NOT COMING.
COME ON THEN ...
JUMP INTO MY ARMS!

SACHI.
SORRY, WERE YOU WAITING LONG?
WE WILL ABSOLUTELY OVERCOME THIS WALL.
←2F
HERE, CARRY THIS. IT'S SUPER HEAVY.
WE WILL ABSOLUTELY OVERCOME THIS WALL.
←2F
WHAT, ARE YOU DOING MANGA AGAIN?

JUST SAY YOU HAVE A BOY-FRIEND...
SHIT, BITCH!

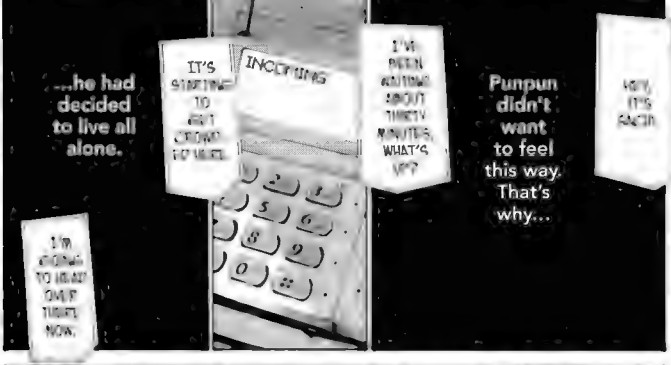


Chapter 86

RRRRR

RRRRR
RRRRR
RRRRR

I'M OUT RIGHT NOW...
PLEASE LEAVE YOUR NAME AND A MESSAGE AFTER THE TONE.

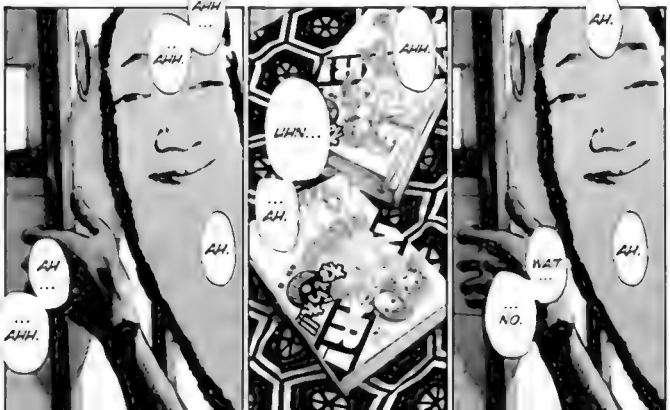

...he had decided to live all alone.
IT'S STARTING TO GET CROWD TO HERE.
INCOMING
I'VE BEEN WAITING ABOUT THIRTY MINUTES, WHAT'S UP?
Punpun didn't want to feel this way. That's why...
HEY, IT'S BACON
I'M GOING TO HEAT CHUP TIGHT NOW.

...and this was what happened.

Let your guard down for a second...

AH.
AHH.
AH
AHH
AH

AH.
UHN
...
...
AHH,
AHH.
TAKA,
TAKA!
OH
MY
GOD!
AH.
UHN

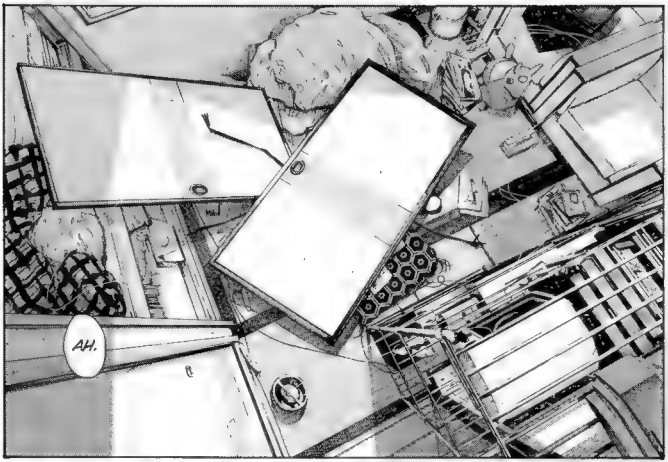

AHH
...
...
AHH.
AH.
AH
...
...
AHH.
AHH.
UHN...
...
AH.
AH.
KAT
...
...
NO.
AH.
AH.

AH!
IT'S...
...NOT LIKE I...
AH ...
... AH.
ANH ...
... OH!
ANH.
GAH!
...LIKE YOU OR ANY-THING.
ANH.
AH.
OH ...
... AH.
YES ...
YEES!
WAIT ...
AH ...
... WOW!
AH.
AHH ...
... AH!
AH.
OH.
SOME-ONE.
AHH ...
... AH.
AH.
AHH.
PLEASE HELP ME!
AHH.
AH ...
... AHH.
AHH ...
... AH.
AH.
AH ...
... AHH.
Warning
[redacted] you are a liar You are not human I will never forgive you Because of you, my life is destroyed I curse you and your family I will hate [illegible] you are in hell I [illegible] you down wherever [illegible] I will never forgive you [illegible] how much you apologize [illegible] I will tear off your childrens fingernails, then I'll pull out their teeth and then I will blind them next I will tear off your wifes limbs and feed them to a dog
UHN!
... ... AH.
DON'T LOOK AT ME.
AH ...
... AH!
GAH!
UHN!
UHN!
HUH?
SERI-OUSLY, YOU'RE CREEPY.
JUST HAVING TO LOOK AT YOU TURNS MY STOMACH.
UHN!

Can I lick your pussy?

I LOVE YOU, PUNPUN.
AH.
LOVE, LOVE, LOVE YOU!
AHH.
I LOVE YOU.
I DON'T WANT ANYTHING ELSE, AS LONG AS YOU'RE WITH ME.
ANH.
OUCH.
OW!
WHOA.
WAIT!
AHH ...
I'M DYING, I'M DYING.
... AH.
AH ...
... AHH.
OH..
YOU'RE JUST HOPE-LESS!
AH.
GAH!
JUST JERK OFF ON YOUR OWN FOREVER
AH.
AH ...
... AH.
AH ...
... ANH
DO IT.
AH.
DO IT.
AH.
DO IT!
... DO IT.
AH.
AHH.
AH ...
UHN ...
... AH.
YOU COW-ARD.
PYAPO, PYAPO, BUGYAHII.
AHH ...
... AHH.
DO IT.
DO IT...
... AH.
AHH ...
... AH!
AHH.
AHH.

Shut up!!
Aaargh!!
Hafuho!!


AH.

AH.
AHH, AHH ...
... AHH.

AH.
AHH, AHH ... WOW, WOW.
AH.
A blunt object or a blade. Which would be better?
AH ... ... AHH.
During questioning, the suspect (Onodera, 18) said, "I just lost my temper and stabbed them. I didn't mean to kill them."
HELLOOO.
NOK
NOK
PUNPUN.
HEY.
THE DOOR'S UN-LOCKED.
BROKEN
PUNPUN ONODERA!
ARE YOU IN THERE?

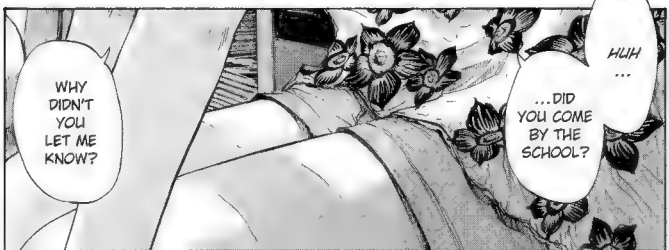
IF YOU'RE HOME, PICK UP THE PHONE.
WHAT THE HELL?!

WHAT'S WRONG?

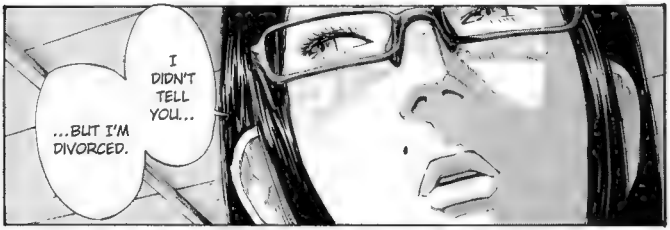
...
THAT'S A LIE, ISN'T IT?
"I'm sorry, I seem to have caught a cold, cough, cough."
"...Yes."

"W-well, heh heh, um, the fireworks, yeah, like, the fireworks, I think you should go with your boyfriend...

"Um, yeah, *hee hee*, sorry. I didn't mean to get in the way. *Hee hee hee*. You've got such a lovely boyfriend who c-comes and picks you up from work, *ba ha ha ha*."

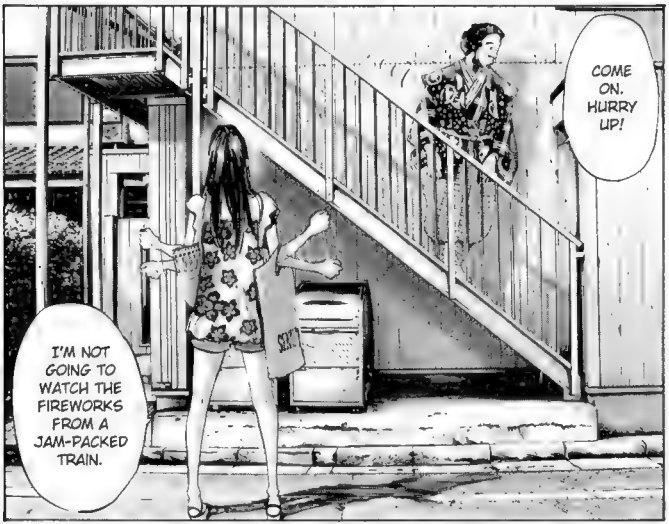


THAT'S NOT MY BOY-FRIEND.
HE'S MY EX-HUSBAND.

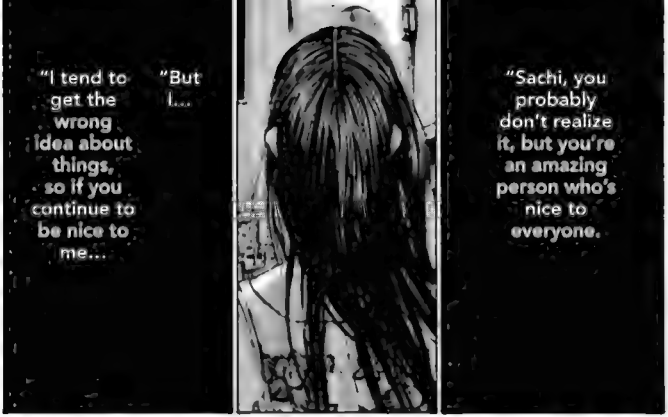

I DIDN'T TELL YOU...
...BUT I'M DIVORCED.

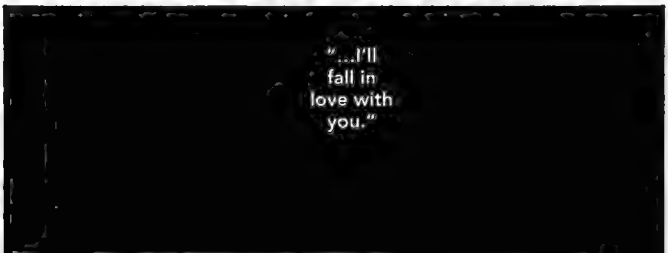
LIKE I SAID BEFORE ...
...THERE'S A GUY AT WORK WHO'S KIND OF STALKING ME AND CREEPING ME OUT.
SO I ASKED MY EX TO COME GET ME TODAY, IN CASE THE CREEPER WAS WAITING FOR ME AFTER WORK.
Whaaat?

I DON'T HAVE MANY MALE FRIENDS.
SO NO NEED TO WORRY.
OH CRAP. I'M AIRING ALL MY DIRTY LAUNDRY.
LET'S GO.


COME ON. HURRY UP!
I'M NOT GOING TO WATCH THE FIREWORKS FROM A JAM-PACKED TRAIN.

OPEN
24h
HOURLY
HEY...
PULL IT TOGETH-ER.
WHAT IS IT?
NEVER MIND.
I'LL JUST GO BY MYSELF.


"I tend to get the wrong idea about things, so if you continue to be nice to me...
"But I...
"Sachi, you probably don't realize it, but you're an amazing person who's nice to everyone.

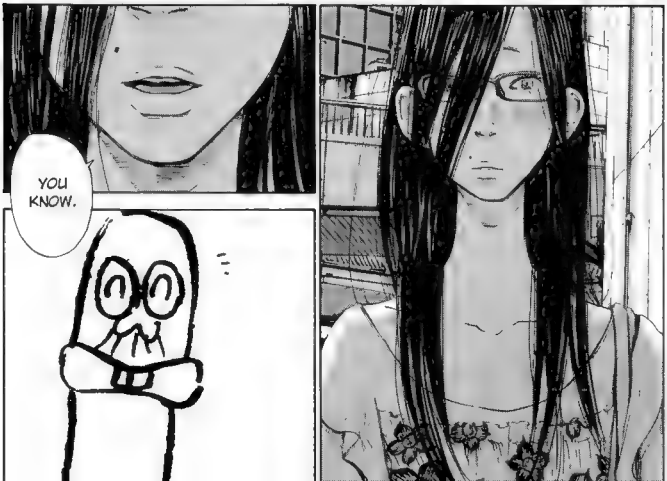

"...I'll fall in love with you."

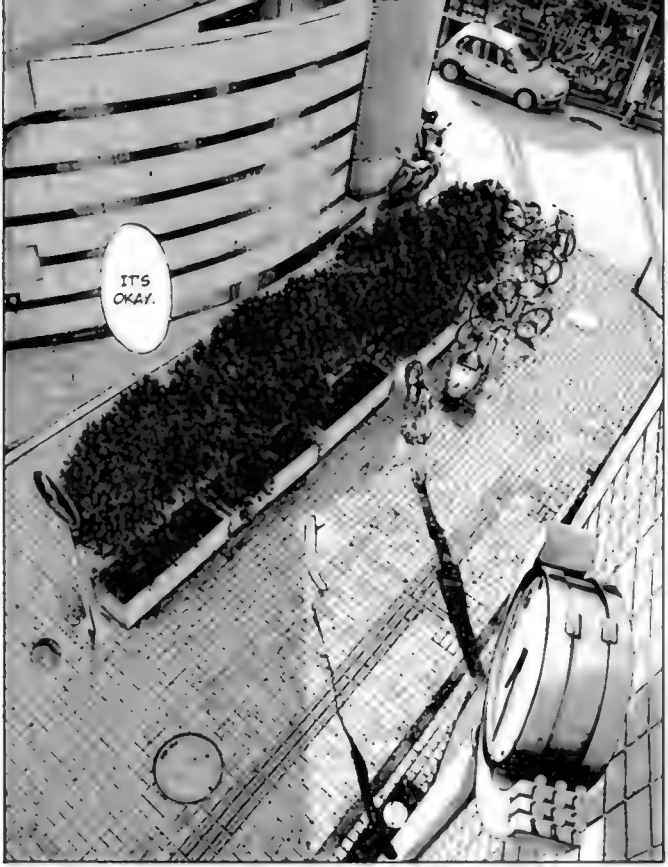
STOP
kashicomo
TOLLY'S

"I'm perfectly happy with our current relationship.
"But please forget I said anything.
"I feel much better now that I've told you.

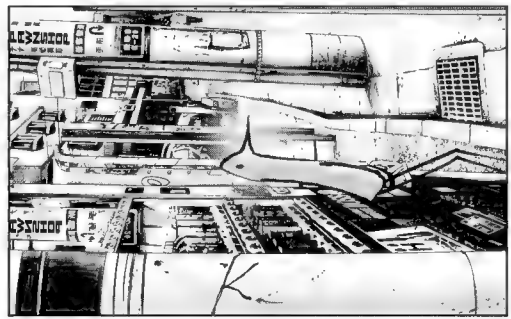
"It's going to start soon."

"Okay, let's hurry.




IT'S OKAY.

...TO FALL IN LOVE WITH ME.
IT'S OKAY...



WELL... THAT WAS A BIT OF A MESS.
BUT I GUESS...
...IT'S BETTER THAT WE CAME HERE...
GROUND ZERO IS PROBABLY REALLY CROWDED.

IF MR. SHISHIDO FINDS OUT WE LET OURSELVES IN...
...HE'LL BE SUPER ANGRY.

HEY...
SAY SOME-THING...
...PUNPUN.

"Lately, I've been thinking about who you remind me of."

"You're like my mom.

"Your personality and temperament are like hers.

"I still hate her, even though she's dead ...

"...and I doubt I'll ever forgive her, but...

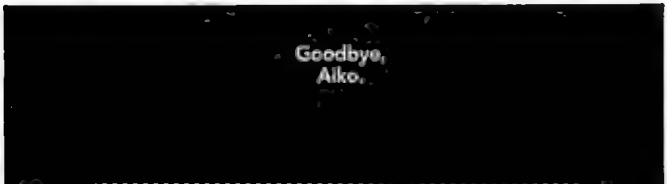
"I don't know how to explain it...

"...but there it is."

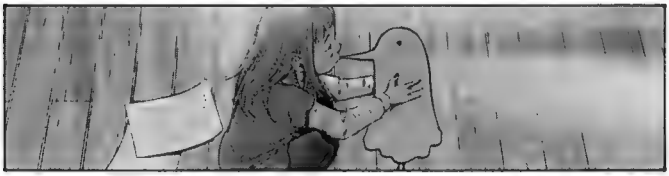
YEAH.

ALICE!!
AH
AHH
AH
DO IT...
SLOW-ER
FUN-FUN...
TAKE YOUR CLOTHES OFF TOO.

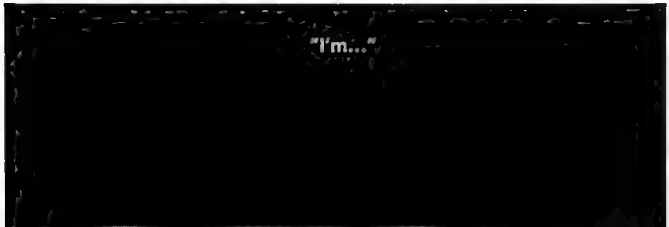
Goodbye, Kanie.
Goodbye, Midori.

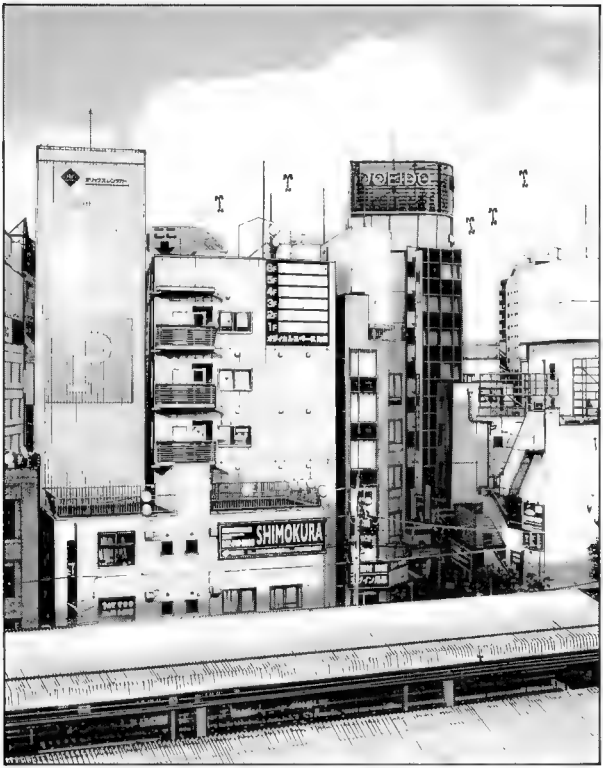

Goodbye, Aiko.

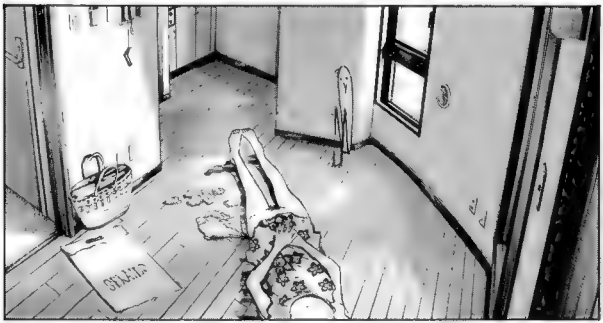
"I'm all right now."

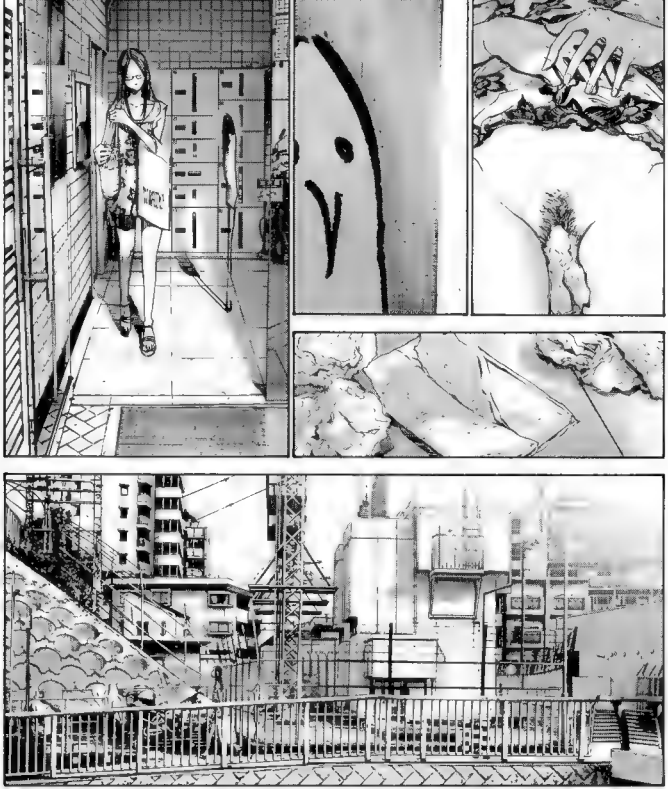


PUNPUN
...
...HOW ABOUT A KISS?


"I'm..."


SHIMOKURA



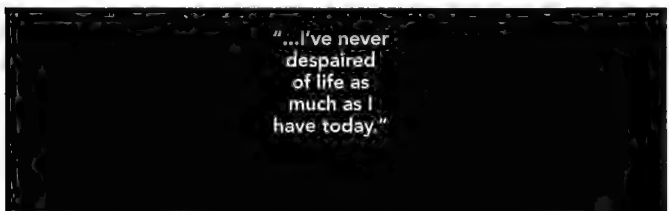


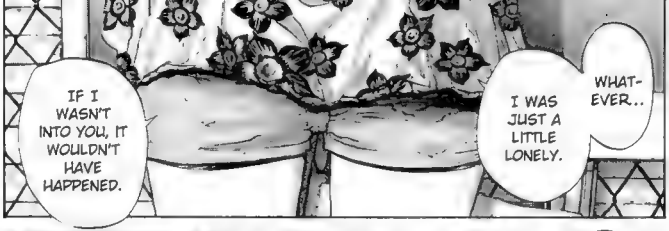
"You can call me 'Hit it and quit it' from now on."
"Sachi."
YEAH?

GET UP.
...NOT OVER THAT GIRL, ARE YOU?
YOU'RE STILL...
"If having sex was all it took to get rid of the chaos...

"In all my 18 years..."
"...then what was the point of my life up until now?

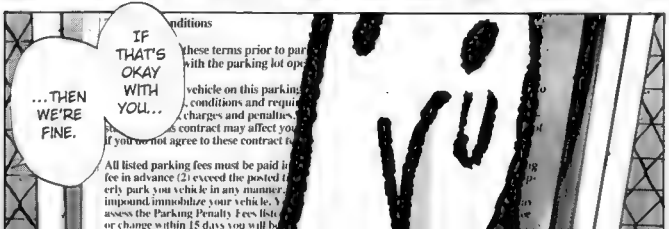
YOU REALLY ARE...
...SUCH A PAIN.
HOURLY
P
$1.00


"...I've never despaired of life as much as I have today."


IF I WASN'T INTO YOU, IT WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED.
I WAS JUST A LITTLE LONELY.
WHAT-EVER..

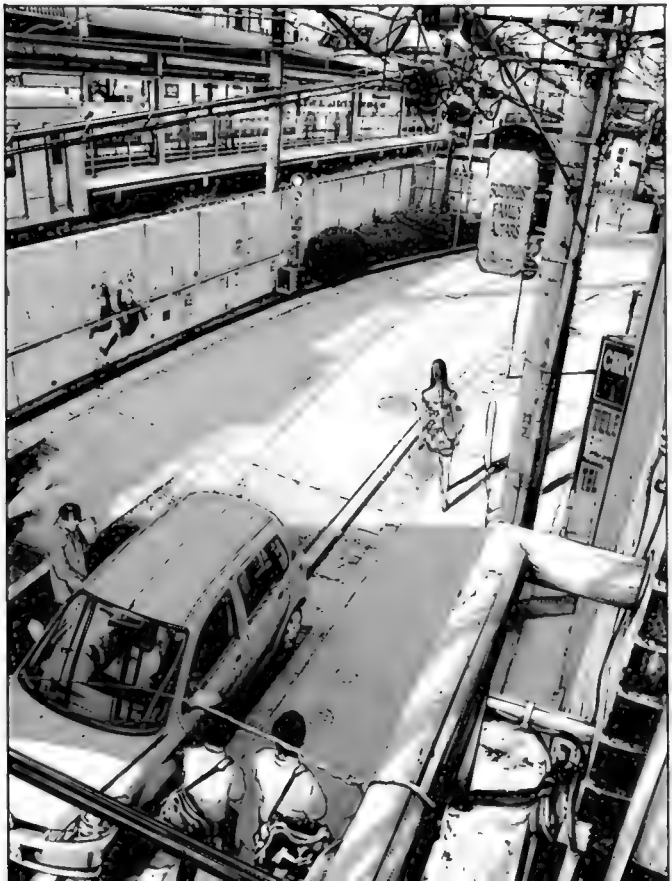
HAVING SEX ONCE...
...DOESN'T MEAN WE'RE SUDDENLY DATING.
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO CHANGE OUR RELATIONSHIP.

I STILL WANT TO WORK WITH YOU.

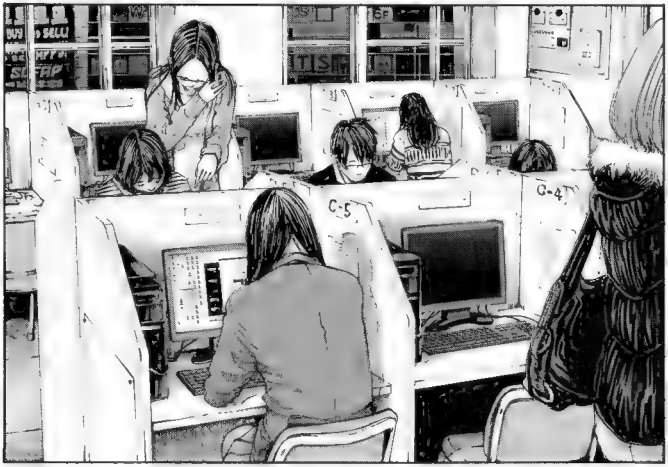

IF THAT'S OKAY WITH YOU...
...THEN WE'RE FINE.
nditions
these terms prior to par
with the parking lot ope
vehicle on this parking
conditions and requi
charges and penalties.
contract may affect you
If you do not agree to these contract t
All listed parking fees must be paid i
fee in advance (2) exceed the posted t
erly park you vehicle in any manner
impound.immobilize your vehicle. Y
assess the Parking Penalty Fees liste
or change within 15 days you will b
yu

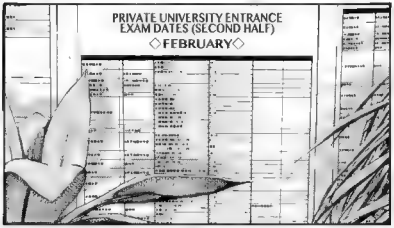
HEY.
CLOSE YOUR EYES FOR A SEC.
YOU'RE SO FULL OF IT.
SAVE YOUR POINTS!

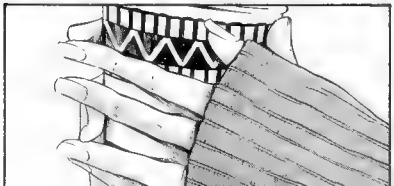
ハイストーンビル
HIGHSTONE BUILDING
FOR RENT
KOKOKOKI
SPORTS GROUP
HIGH STONE

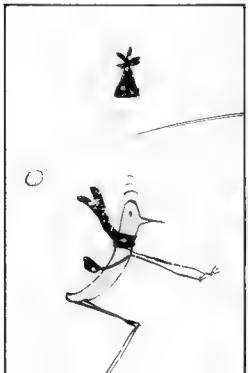


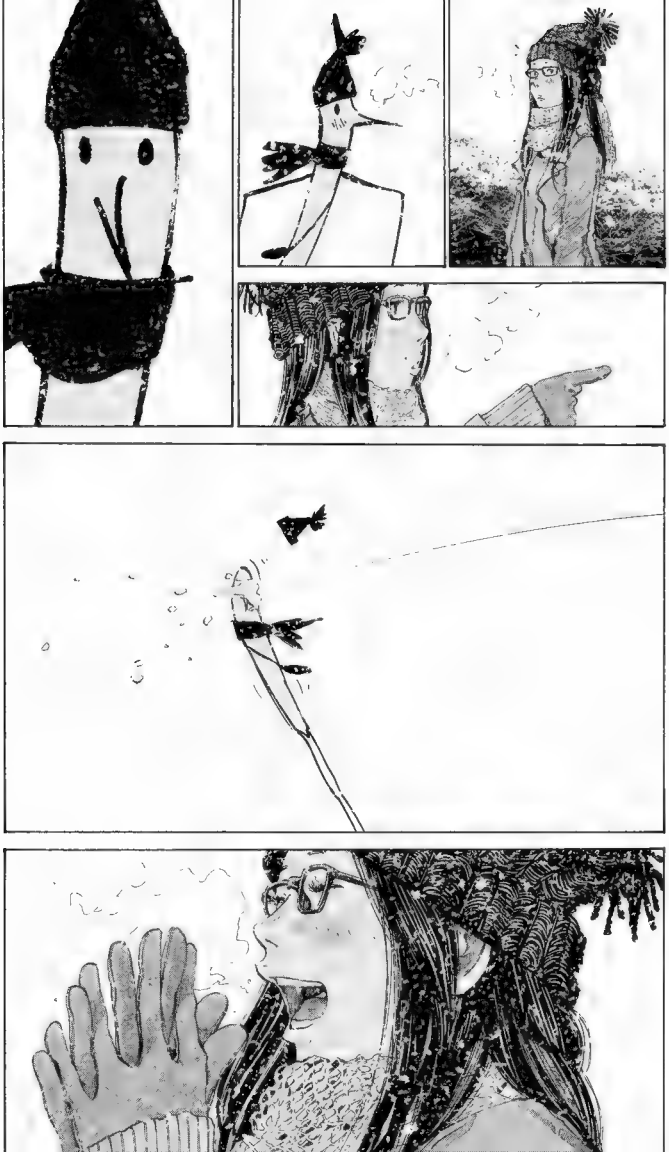
EXAM SCHOOL CLASSES
NAR
PPLIANCE

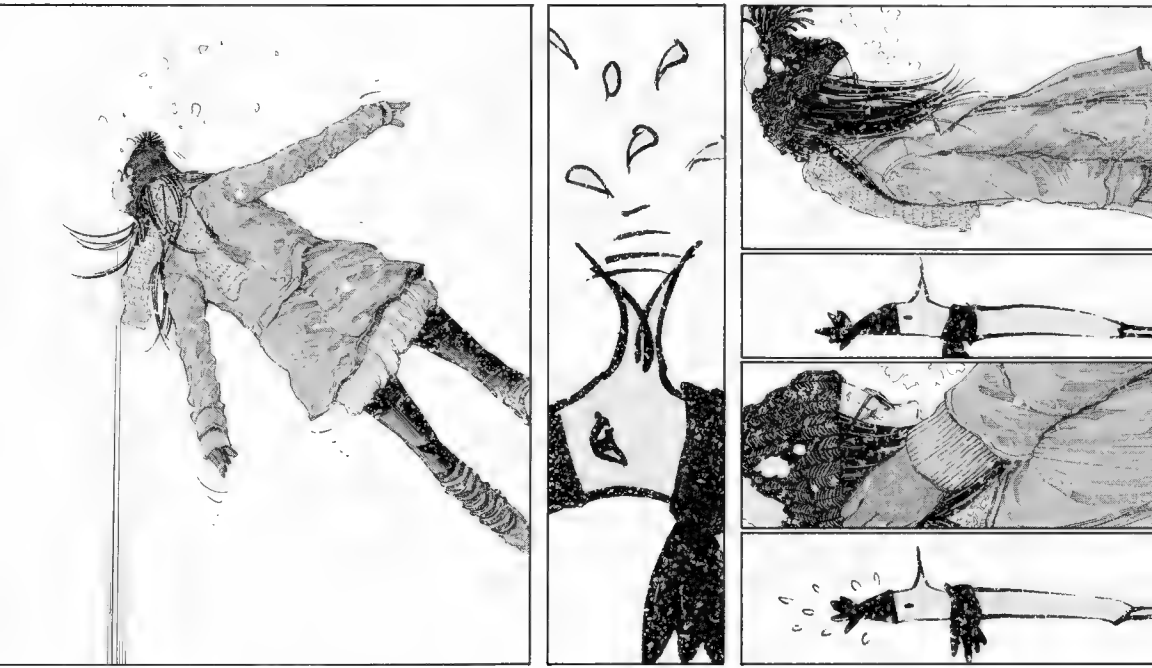

G-5
G-4

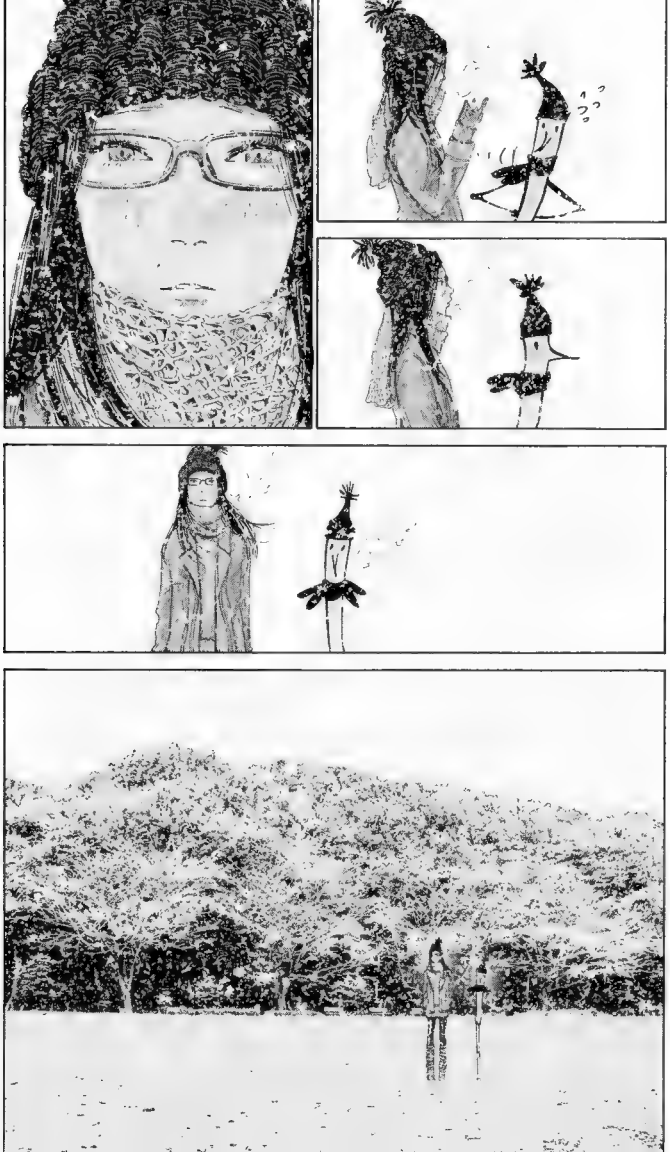

PRIVATE UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE
EXAM DATES (SECOND HALF)
◇FEBRUARY◇





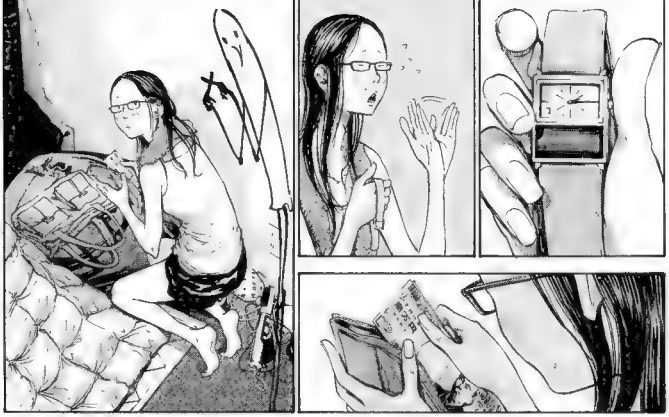






GIGA
DON KIHOTE
GIGA
DON KIHOTE

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
SACHI



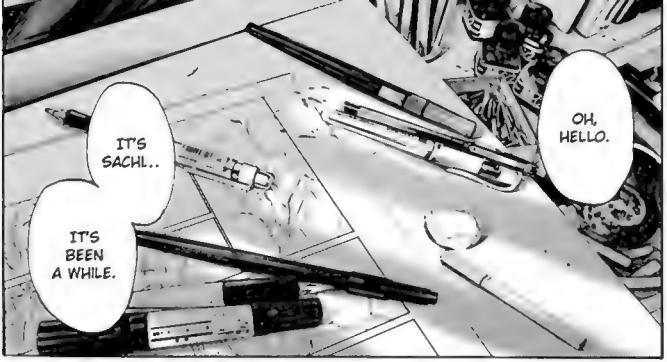
Yo,
Pumpun!
Yo!
Yo!

You're just a piece of shit.

What right do you have to feel happy?

This delusion isn't going to *last* forever.

One
year
later.


OH, HELLO.
IT'S SACHI..
IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

I'M SORRY, I KNOW YOU'RE SUPER BUSY AT THE END OF THE YEAR.
CAN YOU TALK NOW?

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, BUT I'M TRYING MY HAND AT MANGA AGAIN.
THAT'S RIGHT, I HAVEN'T GIVEN UP...
I THOUGHT I'D START BY COLD-CALLING SOME PUBLISHERS.

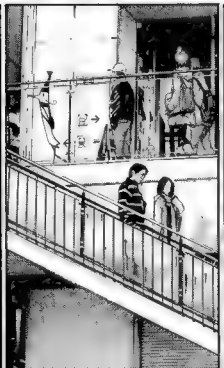
Once again...

...December in the city was full of hurried people bustling through the crowds...

...as if to make up for the laziness of the last 11 months.

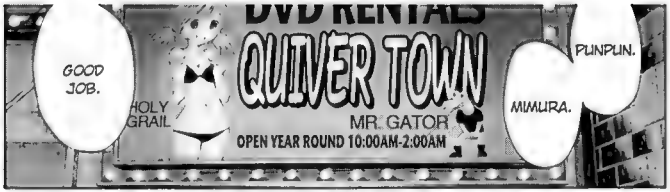
Unlike years past...

...Punpun had mastered the art of keeping step and blending with the crowd.



In the 18 months since he'd started living on his own...

Punpun had changed.

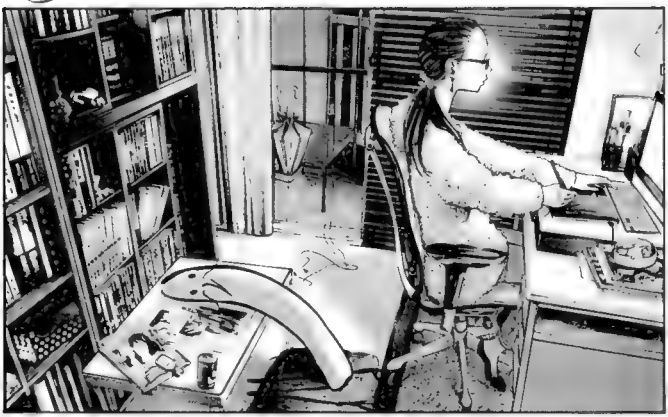

GOOD JOB.
HOLY GRAIL
DVD RENTALS
QUIVER TOWN
MR. GATOR
OPEN YEAR ROUND 10:00AM-2:00AM
PUNPUN.
MIMURA.

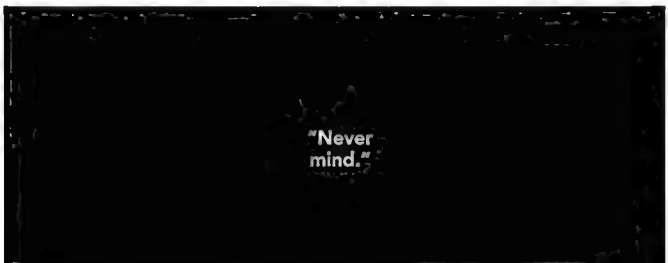
THE EDITOR IS GOING TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE MANGA AFTER THE NEW YEAR.
PUNPUN, CAN YOU HELP ME FINISH IT UP?
SHUT UP, I'M PUSHING HARD.
NANBAN CHICKEN
HELLO, HELLO!
WHAT'S WITH THE DARK CIRCLES? IT RUINS YOUR BEAUTY.

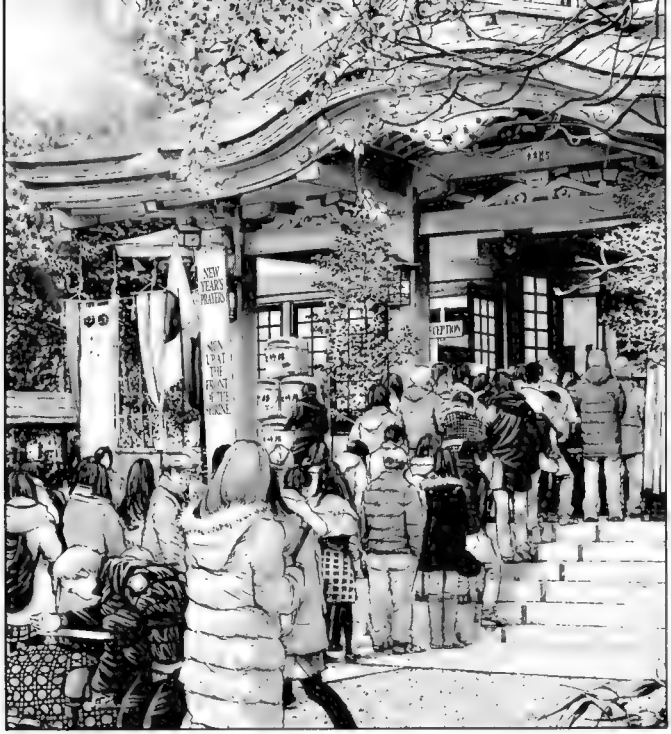
30
YEAH...

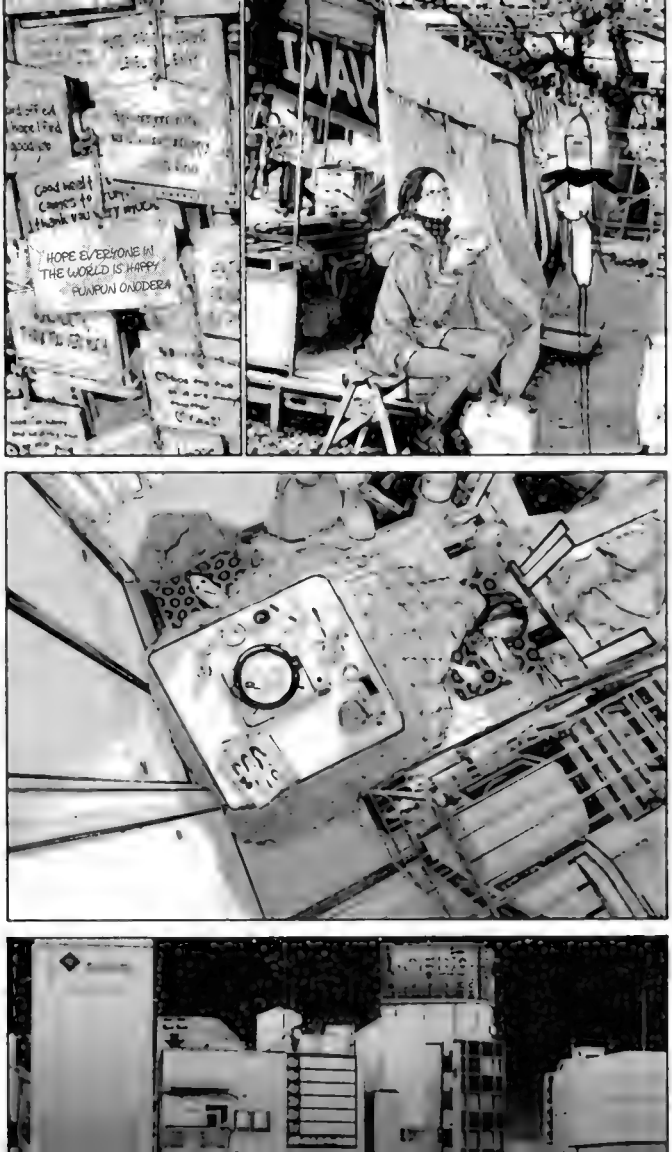
IF I WIN AND GET SOME PRIZE MONEY...

"Sachi, I..."
WHAT, WHAT, WHAAT?
I'M KIDDING.
...LET'S GO TO SOME FAR-AWAY HOT SPRINGS AND HAVE SEX.



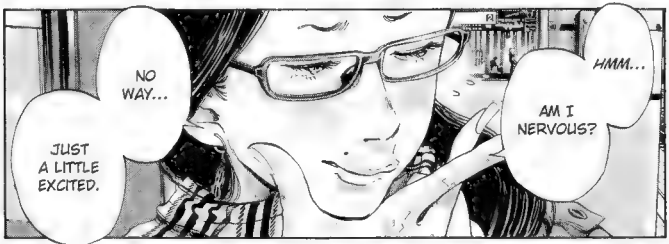

"Never mind."


NEW YEAR'S PRAYERS
SIGN UP AT THE FRONT OF THE SHRINE
CEPTION


HOPE EVERYONE IN
THE WORLD IS HAPPY
PUNPUN ONODERA

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
SENDING YOU NEW YEAR'S WISHES AND NEWS OF OUR MARRIAGE
HAVE A GOOD YEAR I WAIT WE LOOK FORWARD TO STAYING IN TOUCH
A DIVORCE ALREADY (LOL)
Satoshi Kaede
Mayuki
JAPAN PENSION ORGANIZATION

女性専用車
WOMEN ONLY CAR
I WONDER HOW WE ARE FOR TIME...?
MAYBE WE SHOULD HAVE LEFT EARLIER?
OKAY, OKAY...
...WILL YOU CHECK ONE LAST TIME JUST TO BE SURE THAT I HAVE ALL THE PAGES?


NO WAY...
JUST A LITTLE EXCITED.
HMM...
AM I NERVOUS?

HEY.
MY STOMACH HURTS.
OH, OH NO!

MARINE LIKE
FLOATING
THE HIGH TIDE
...ACCEPT ALL UNWANTED ITEMS!
WE...

SEKI.
IF YOU HAVE COMPUTERS, BIKES, OR CD PLAYERS YOU NO LONGER WANT...
...CALL US FOR AN ESTIMATE!
HEY.

HEEEEY !!
SEKI!

WELL, I FEEL LIKE SHIT.
HOW'S IT GOING?
MARINE LIKE
I'M NOT GOING.
THERE'S NO ONE I WANT TO SEE, ANY-WAY.
DID YOU KNOW...
...THE COMING-OF-AGE CEREMONY IS NEXT WEEK?
THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING NOW, I CAN'T SEE ANYONE.
BESIDES...

SHIMIZU ...
...YOU NEVER REALLY CHANGE.
YOU WENT TO COLLEGE. YOU SHOULD HAVE MADE FRIENDS THERE.
YOU NEED TO STOP HANGING WITH ME ALL THE TIME AND GET A LIFE.
WHAT?
I DIDN'T MEAN IT.
DON'T TAKE EVERYTHING SO SERIOUSLY.

UH.
BEHIND YOU.
SHIMIZU ...
OH, HELLO...
WE'RE CHANGING TRAINS AT SHINJUKU RIGHT NOW.
OKAY, I DON'T MIND AT ALL.
SURE, GOT IT.

I GOT ALL WORKED UP FOR NOTHING.
PHEW!
THE EDITOR...
...SAID HE'S PUSHING OUR MEETING BACK AN HOUR.
BE-CAUSE...
...THIS IS AN EMERGENCY THAT SHAKES THE VERY FOUNDATION OF OUR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION!
LISTEN, EVERY-ONE.
WE'RE ALL SUFFER-ING!
...IT TOOK US 18 MONTHS TO FINISH THIS.
WELL, ALL TOLD...
I SWEAR RIGHT HERE, WE WILL NEVER RESONATE WITH THREE-DIMENSIONAL WOMEN.
OHH, TWO DIMENSIONS! TWO-DIMENSIONAL PANTIES. I WANT TO SEE THEM, DRAW THEM AND RUB THEM...
THE ONLY THING THAT BRINGS US JOY IS PLAYING WITH TWO-DIMENSIONAL GIRLS.
IN THIS MISANDRIST, POLITICALLY CORRECT GYNOCRACY, WE ARE THE OPPRESSED!

MY ULTRA-LOGICAL PRESENTATION WILL...
AH HA HA...
I'M SURE IT WILL BE FINE.

WHO ARE YOU?
HUH?

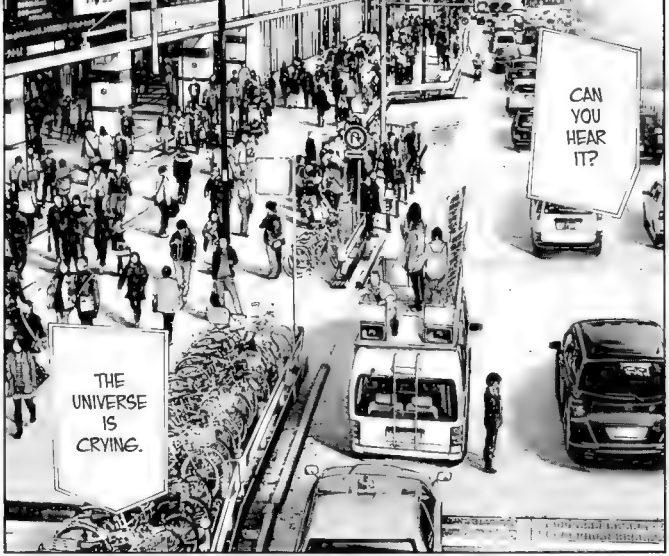
WAIT ...
...OH.
WAIT! HEY, LET GO!

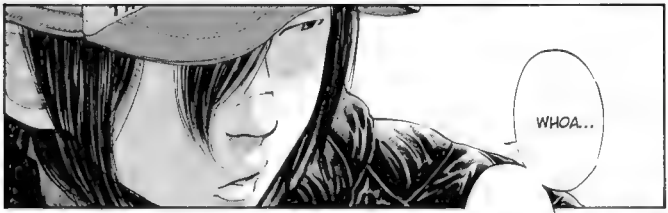
JR SHINJUKU
NO HEALTH REFORM
NO HEALTH REFORM
BARGAIN

GOOD
VIBRATIONS.

I HAVE DECIDED TO RUN FOR MAYOR OF TOKYO!
CALL ME PEGASUS.
THANK YOU, EVERYONE.
I...

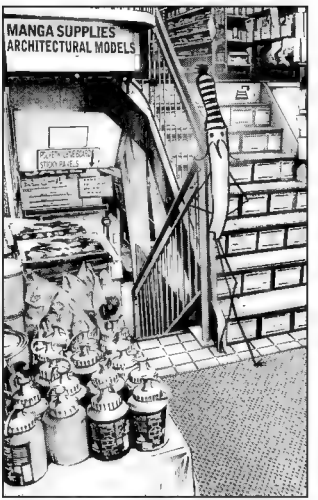
...THE EARTH WILL BE DESTROYED.
IN SIX MONTHS' TIME...


CAN YOU HEAR IT?
THE UNIVERSE IS CRYING.


WHOA..

IT'S BEEN..
...A REALLY LONG TIME.

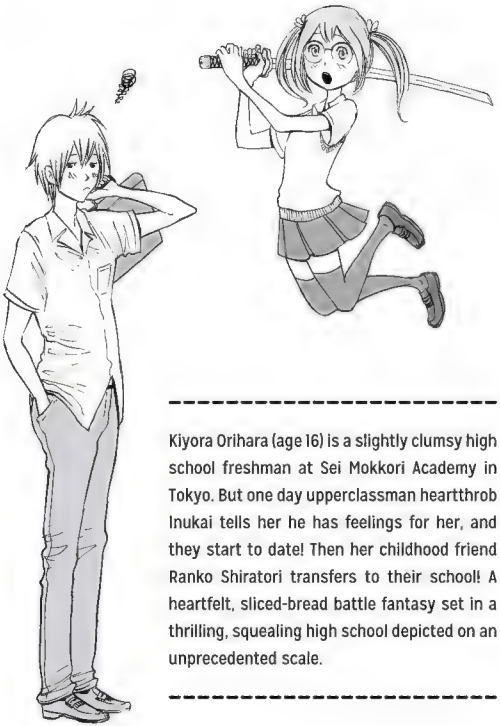
AIKO TANAKA...



GOODNIGHT PUNPUN INIO ASANO

Part Eight

BACKGROUND ASSISTANTS Yuki Toribuchi
Satsuki Sato
CG ASSISTANT Hisashi Saito
COOPERATION Kumatsuto
Yu Uehara



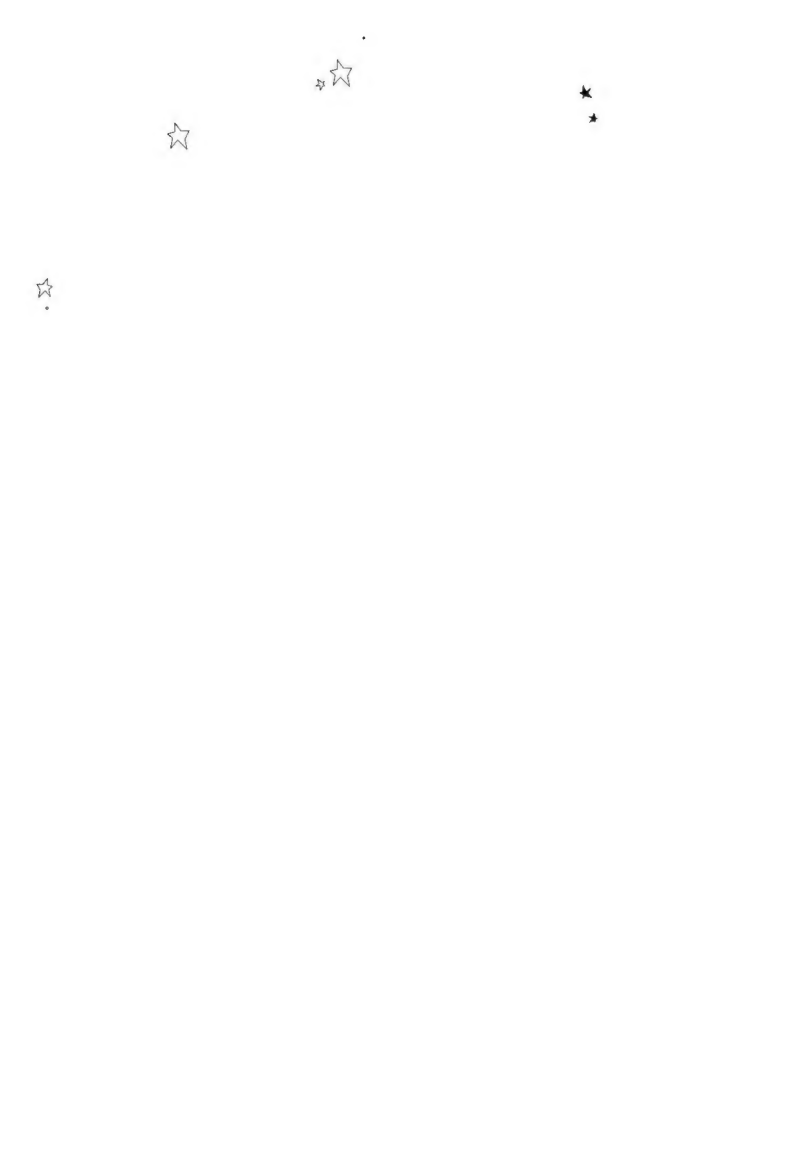
Kiyora Orihara (age 16) is a slightly clumsy high school freshman at Sei Mokkori Academy in Tokyo. But one day upperclassman heartthrob Inukai tells her he has feelings for her, and they start to date! Then her childhood friend Ranko Shiratori transfers to their school! A heartfelt, sliced-bread battle fantasy set in a thrilling, squealing high school depicted on an unprecedented scale.

Holy Grail

Sir Gator

The next volume is fun too!!

INIO ASANO, a bona fide earthling, was born in Ibaraki, Japan, in 1980. In 2001, his short story "Uchu kara Konnichiwa" (Hello from Outer Space) won the first Sunday GX Rookie Prize. Later, GX published his series *Subarashi Sekai*, available in English from VIZ Media as *What a Wonderful World!* His other works include *Hikari no Machi* (City of Light), *Nijigahara Holograph* and *Umibe no Onna no Ko* (A Girl on the Shore), as well as *Solanin*, also available from VIZ Media.



GOODNIGHT PUNPUN

Volume 4

VIZ Signature Edition

Story and Art by INIO ASANO

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by Inio ASANO
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